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“The point where you feel like quitting is exactly where winners are created.”

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INSIDE
LS clears grants of ₹53 lakh crore for Ministries
NEW DELHI
The Lok Sabha on Wednesday approved an expenditure of over ₹53 lakh crore for the period 2024-27 on Wednesday by exploring the guidelines, passing the Demands for Grants for various Ministries, without a discussion. ■ PAGE 4

SIT names 39 for 'circulating obscene clip'
HYDRAABAD
The Karnataka Police's Special Investigation Team (SIT), probing the circulation of explicit video clips and photographs related to multiple instances of sexual abuse allegedly committed by former JDS MP Pragna Ravindra, has filed a charge-sheet in a court against 39 people. ■ PAGE 3

Indian students stranded in Iran exit via 2 routes
NEW DELHI
Stranded Indian students are being allowed to use the twin route of Armenia and Azerbaijan to exit war-torn Iran and head for New Delhi. Officials said about 154 Indians have crossed New Azerbaijan border to return to India in the past 24 hours. ■ PAGE 2

22 India-bound ships on Hormuz evacuation list

Of these, 20 vessels have been assessed as critical to India's energy security, carrying over 5 lakh tonnes of LNG, LPG and 16.76 lakh tonnes of crude oil; many agencies join hands for evacuation

M. Salyanarayanan
CHENNAI
Twenty-two India-bound vessels in the Persian Gulf region have been identified for evacuation for safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz by the Indian government.
Of these, 20 vessels have been assessed as critical to India's energy security, carrying some 2.18 lakh metric tonnes of LNG, 3.23 lakh tonnes of LPG and 16.76 lakh tonnes of crude oil. These vessels are both Indian flagged and foreign-flagged but all are bound for India.



Seafood delivery Indian flagged vessel, *Jag Laxmi* carrying approximately 8,000 MT of seafood, berthed at Aden Port, Aden on Wednesday.

Critical cargo
Among the 20 energy-critical vessels, 10 are Indian-flagged. The 20 vessels include three LNG carriers, 10 LPG carriers, and seven trade oil tankers. Marshall Islands, Liberia, Greece, Malta, and Portugal are some of the other flags these ships carry.
In addition, two Indian-flagged container vessels have also been identified for evacuation to ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz.
Coordination is ongoing with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways; Directorate of Naval Operations (DNO); Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MOPNG); and the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFCIRIO) for the evacuation of the ves-

sels from the Persian Gulf region.
Two LPG carriers and one oil tanker — *Shivalik*, *Nanda Devi* and *Jag Laxmi* — were evacuated earlier, escorted by the Indian Navy from the United Arab Emirates. The vessel narrowly escaped damage when the *Jagriti* terminal where it was berthed was attacked.
Stranded seafarers
Some 23,000 Indian seafarers are stranded in the Persian Gulf, of whom 650 are on Indian-flagged vessels.
Some 472 seafarers have been evacuated by various shipping companies from the Gulf region so far, as per the government. In total, 22 Indian vessels are in the Persian Gulf region, west of the Strait of Hor-

muz, two in the Gulf of Oman, east of the strait; one in the Gulf of Aden and two in the Red Sea.
Of these, the government-owned shipping Corporation of India owns six of which five are in Persian Gulf and one in the Gulf of Aden.
No Indian ship has been attacked so far in the conflict in West Asia. But these Indian seafarers have died, and one reported missing in foreign-flagged vessels.
Government sources said that seven West Asia-bound vessels were waiting in major ports and five in other ports in India.
(with inputs from *Sapta-purno Ghosh* in New Delhi)

RELATED REPORTS ON
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Iran hits Gulf energy sites after attack on its gas field; Tehran's intel chief killed

Stamps/Indus

Iran on Wednesday night struck oil facilities in Persian Gulf countries, following the U.S. and Israeli strikes on gas facilities in Iran's southern Bushahr province. This came hours after Israeli air strikes killed Iran's intelligence minister Esmail Khatib, the third high-profile Iranian politician in 24 hours.
" Moments ago, parts of the gas facilities located in the South Pars Special Economic Energy Zone in Aban were struck by projectiles fired by the American Zionist enemy," Iranian state television reported. "The South Pars North Dome mega-field is the largest known gas reserve in the world. Iran had earlier warned that any attack on its energy infrastructure would trigger retaliatory strikes at energy and gas sites in the region."
Qatar's state-run energy company said that fire set by Israeli strikes on its main gas facility had caused "severe damage" to the plant. "QatarEnergy confirms that Ras Laffan Industrial City this evening has been the subject of orders for people living near key energy production facilities in the Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE. This has been reported at this time."
Qatar said that attacks were a "direct threat to its national security." Qatar considers this assault a dangerous escalation, a flagrant violation of its sovereignty, and a direct threat to its national security, the



Sea of measures: People at the funeral of Iranian security chief Ali Larjani in Tehran on Wednesday.

Gulf state's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.
According to late night reports, a second round of loud explosions rang out over Riyadh, after authorities previously said they intercepted four missiles.
Iran's Khatam Al-Anbia military command earlier said in a statement that it would "severely strike the source of the aggression and consider targeting the reactor of the country from which the attacks were launched. Iran says the U.S. is using its bases in the Persian Gulf monarchies to launch its attacks.
The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps had issued "urgent evacuation" orders for people living near key energy production facilities in the Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE.
According to Iran's Oil Ministry, U.S.-Israeli air strikes targeted parts of the refinery installations in Assabakh that process natural gas from South Pars, located on the maritime border between Iran and Qatar. "We have repeatedly warned... your leaders

against following this dangerous path and dragging their people into a major gamble with their fate," the IRGC said.
"The cowardly assassination of my dear colleague Esmail Khatib, Ali Larjani, and Amir Nasirzadeh, alongside some of their family members and seven young men, has left us in deep mourning," he wrote in a social media post.
In separate strikes on Monday night, Israel had killed Larjani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and Commander Soleimani, commander of the Basij paramilitary forces.
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has "authorized the IDF to (re-assess) any other Iranian figure without the need for further approval," he said.
Mr. Katz said.
(With inputs from AFP)

REPORT FORWARDED
PAGE 14

Three children among nine of family killed as fire engulfs building in Delhi

Shrimantri Kashyap
NEW DELHI

Nine members of a family, including three children, were killed on Wednesday and three others were injured in a fire that gutted four floors of a building housing shops and the living quarters of the family in Ram Chowk, Palam Colony in South-West Delhi.
One of the men died after jumping from the third floor of the building along with his brother's two-year-old girl, who survived. The cause of the fire is not yet known.
The police said they received an alert around 7 a.m. following which they rushed to the spot.
Locals said a hydraulic lift did not operate, delaying rescue operations. "The first hydraulic lift that had come at 7:30 a.m. did not open. The fire had already spread to the top floor by the time the second lift came at 8 a.m.," said Devi Lal Aggarwal, a resident.
"One man jumped from the third floor but was being pulled along with his brother's two-year-old daughter



Rescue aftermath: NDRF and Fire Service personnel carrying out rescue operations in Delhi on Wednesday.

when the fire spread to the top. He was screaming from the balcony but the fire services did not have a net to catch him," he said.
However, Chief Fire Officer, Delhi Fire Services, A.K. Malik said, "The claimers are not entirely true. The lift was working initially and was involved in rescue operations. Technical glitch occurred at about 7:30 a.m. after which another vehicle was brought."
The police said around 20 fire tenders and 81 ambulances were pressed into service alongside staff from Air Force police and

Locals said Mr. Kashyap was in Goa at the time of the incident. "He had been running the shop himself until a decade ago. Then he decided to hand over the shops to his sons Praveesh and Sachin. It is heartbreaking to see an entire family being affected like this," said Sarpal Singh, a resident.
The Ram Chowk market has about 200 shops that are commercial-subsistent spaces.
Ved Prakash, secretary of the South Nagar Market Sangathan, said the entire building was covered with plastic sheet that caught the fire to spread.
Residents said that dangling internet and electrical wires in the area pose a hazard. "Last time, we saw another fire caused by internet wires that brought the house down," he said.
Nine members of the Kashyap family who died were Praveesh, 24, Ranjith, 39, Ashu, 35, Laxo, 70, Himanshu, 22, and Deepika, 22, along with three minor girls aged 15, 6 and 3.

Eight dead after EV explodes while being charged at Indore residence

Shubul Khanani
Bhopal

Eight people, including two minors, were killed in Indore on Wednesday after a massive fire engulfed a three-story house following an explosion in an electric car that was being charged outside the premises, officials said.
The fire broke out around 4 a.m. when 12 people were asleep at the rented space.
Zone-3 Deputy Commissioner of Bhopal Market Tarek told *The Hindu* that of the deceased, six were residents of Bhopal who had come to Indore to visit relatives. The State government evacuated survivors over incident and ordered a probe.
The deceased were identified as Tanmay, 7; Rishi, 16; 12; Shivan Pagalia, 30; Tintu, 35; Sushant, 38; and Anshu, 69, Chhoti Naria, 22, and Chhoti owner Manoj Pagalia, 65.
Mr. Praseek said that the incident was caused from the building with minor injuries, while shared



Chaos remains: Police personnel gather near the wreckage of a car after the Delhi on Wednesday.

holders of the eight victims were recovered from the site.
Concerning factors
Citing a preliminary investigation, the ICR said that the fire began following a probe into the incident and quickly spread to electric wiring and a sports bike parked inside the house.
"The fire intensified after use of several LPG cylinders kept in the house exploded. The rescue teams had a tough time getting in as an door fitted with electronic locks got jammed due to a malfunction. The teams had to

technology and its application. "The State government will work towards preventing such incidents and fostering awareness in this regard," he said, according to a statement from the Chief Minister's office.
Cabinet Minister Kailash Vijayarajya, an MLA from Indore, visited the spot and termed the incident "alarming," given that the society is heading towards the use of electric vehicles.
"We have asked the police and administration to conduct a detailed investigation by a committee of experts," he said, calling for the preparation of a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the use of EVs.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi also considered the deaths.
"Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. I pray for the speedy recovery of the injured. An *ex gratia* of ₹2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each deceased. The injured would be given ₹10,000," the Prime Minister posted on X.

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In addition, two Indian-flagged container vessels have also been identified for evacuation to ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

Coordination is ongoing with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways; Directorate of Naval Operations (DNO); Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG); and the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFCIOR) for the evacuation of the ves-



Secure delivery: Indian-flagged vessel *Jag Laadki* carrying approximately 81,000 MT of crude oil, berthed at Adani Port, Mundra on Wednesday.

sels from the Persian Gulf region.

Two LPG carriers and one oil tanker – *Shivalik*, *Nanda Devi* and *Jag Laadki* – were evacuated earlier, escorted by the Indian Navy from the Gulf of Oman region.

The three ships have reached India. The two LPG ships were carrying some 97,000 tonnes of the fuel. Navy sources had told *The Hindu* that the escorting will continue in future as well.

Shivalik has been partially discharged at Mundra and is awaiting commencement of ship-to-ship operations by the charterer, IOC. *Nanda Devi* has doubled-banked with *BW Birch* for ship-to-ship transfer at Vadinar. Cargo operations are expected to start soon.

Crude carrier *Jag Laadki* that was escorted by the Indian Navy reached Mundra Port earlier on Friday.

It was carrying approximately 81,000 metric tonnes of Murban crude oil from the United Arab Emirates. The vessel narrowly escaped damage when the Fujairah terminal where it was loading was attacked.

Stranded seafarers

Some 23,000 Indian seafarers are stranded in the Persian Gulf, of whom 658 are on Indian-flagged vessels.

Some 472 seafarers have been evacuated by various shipping companies from the Gulf region so far, as per the government. In total, 22 Indian vessels are in the Persian Gulf region, west of the Strait of Hor-

muz; two in the Gulf of Oman, east of the strait; one in the Gulf of Aden; and two in the Red Sea.

Of these, the government-owned Shipping Corporation of India owns six, of which five are in Persian Gulf and one in the Gulf of Aden.

No Indian ship has been attacked so far in the conflict in West Asia. But three Indian seafarers have died, four have been injured, and one reported missing in foreign-flagged vessels.

Government sources said that seven West Asia-bound vessels were waiting at major ports and five in other ports in India.

(with inputs from *Saptaparno Ghosh* in New Delhi)

RELATED REPORTS ON
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1. Immediate issue for India — भारत के लिए तात्कालिक स्थिति

- India has identified **22 India-bound ships** in the Persian Gulf region for safe passage/evacuation through the Strait of Hormuz — भारत सरकार ने पर्शियन गल्फ क्षेत्र में **22 भारत-आने वाले जहाजों** को स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज से सुरक्षित निकासी/सुरक्षित मार्ग के लिए चिन्हित किया है।
- Out of these, **20 ships are considered critical for India's energy security** — इनमें से **20 जहाज भारत की ऊर्जा सुरक्षा के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण** माने गए हैं।
- These vessels are carrying large quantities of **LNG, LPG and crude oil**, so the issue is not only maritime but also linked to **energy supply, inflation and economic stability** — ये जहाज **LNG, LPG और कच्चा तेल** लेकर आ रहे हैं, इसलिए यह मामला केवल समुद्री सुरक्षा का नहीं बल्कि **ऊर्जा आपूर्ति, महँगाई और आर्थिक स्थिरता** से भी जुड़ा है।
- A large number of **Indian seafarers** are also present in the Gulf region, making human safety an important concern — खाड़ी क्षेत्र में बड़ी संख्या में **भारतीय नाविक/सीफायरर्स** भी मौजूद हैं, इसलिए मानवीय सुरक्षा भी एक बड़ा मुद्दा है।

2. Why Strait of Hormuz is important — स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज इतना महत्वपूर्ण क्यों है

- The **Strait of Hormuz** connects the **Persian Gulf** with the **Gulf of Oman**, and then with the **Arabian Sea** — स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज पर्शियन गल्फ को गल्फ ऑफ ओमान और आगे अरब सागर से जोड़ता है।
- It is one of the world's most important **oil transit chokepoints** — यह विश्व के सबसे महत्वपूर्ण **तेल-परिवहन संकरे समुद्री मार्गों** में से एक है।
- A significant share of global **oil and LNG trade** passes through this route — विश्व के **तेल और LNG व्यापार** का बड़ा हिस्सा इसी मार्ग से होकर गुजरता है।
- If this route is disrupted, the impact is felt globally in the form of **higher oil prices, higher freight cost and supply uncertainty** — यदि यह मार्ग बाधित होता है, तो वैश्विक स्तर पर **तेल की कीमत, मालभाड़ा लागत और आपूर्ति अनिश्चितता** बढ़ जाती है।

3. Importance for India — भारत के लिए इसका महत्व

- India depends heavily on imported energy, especially from West Asia — भारत ऊर्जा के आयात, विशेषकर पश्चिम एशिया, पर काफी निर्भर है।
- A large part of India's **LPG imports** comes through the Strait of Hormuz — भारत के **LPG आयात** का बड़ा हिस्सा स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज से होकर आता है।
- Even if India has diversified some of its crude sources, this route remains strategically important — भले ही भारत ने कुछ कच्चे तेल के स्रोतों में विविधता लाई हो, फिर भी यह मार्ग सामरिक रूप से बहुत महत्वपूर्ण बना हुआ है।
- Any disruption can affect **fuel prices, transport cost, cooking gas supply and inflation in India** — किसी भी बाधा का असर भारत में ईंधन कीमतों, परिवहन लागत, रसोई गैस आपूर्ति और महँगाई पर पड़ सकता है।

4. What the report indicates — समाचार क्या संकेत देता है

- India is trying to ensure safe movement of **critical energy cargo** — भारत महत्वपूर्ण ऊर्जा कार्गो की सुरक्षित आवाजाही सुनिश्चित करने में लगा है।
- This shows coordination between multiple agencies such as shipping, petroleum, navy and external affairs — इससे शिपिंग, पेट्रोलियम, नौसेना और विदेश नीति से जुड़ी कई एजेंसियों के बीच समन्वय दिखाई देता है।
- The issue is not just about a few ships, but about **national energy security and strategic preparedness** — यह मामला केवल कुछ जहाजों का नहीं, बल्कि राष्ट्रीय ऊर्जा सुरक्षा और सामरिक तैयारी का है।

5. Geographical facts — भौगोलिक तथ्य

- The Strait of Hormuz lies between **Iran and Oman** — स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज ईरान और ओमान के बीच स्थित है।
- It serves as the main sea outlet for the Gulf region to the open ocean — यह खाड़ी क्षेत्र से खुले समुद्र तक जाने का मुख्य समुद्री निकास मार्ग है।
- Because the waterway is narrow, even a small conflict or naval threat can create a major global impact — क्योंकि यह जलडमरूमध्य संकरा है, इसलिए छोटा-सा संघर्ष या नौसैनिक खतरा भी बड़ा वैश्विक प्रभाव डाल सकता है।

6. Historical background — ऐतिहासिक पृष्ठभूमि

- The Gulf region has long been central to world energy politics due to its vast oil and gas reserves — विशाल तेल और गैस भंडारों के कारण खाड़ी क्षेत्र लंबे समय से विश्व ऊर्जा राजनीति का केंद्र रहा है।
- During the **Iran-Iraq War**, attacks on oil tankers highlighted the vulnerability of Gulf shipping routes — ईरान-इराक युद्ध के दौरान तेल टैंकरों पर हमलों ने खाड़ी के समुद्री मार्गों की संवेदनशीलता को उजागर किया था।
- In recent decades, sanctions, tanker seizures and regional tensions have repeatedly made Hormuz a strategic flashpoint — पिछले दशकों में प्रतिबंधों, टैंकर जब्ती और क्षेत्रीय तनावों ने होर्मुज को बार-बार सामरिक तनाव-बिंदु बनाया है।

7. Political significance — राजनीतिक महत्व

- The Strait of Hormuz affects not only Gulf countries, but also major energy importers such as **India, China, Japan and European countries** — स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज केवल खाड़ी देशों को नहीं, बल्कि भारत, चीन, जापान और यूरोपीय देशों जैसे बड़े ऊर्जा आयातकों को भी प्रभावित करता है।
- It is closely tied to tensions involving **Iran, Gulf monarchies, the United States and other global powers** — यह ईरान, खाड़ी राजतंत्रों, अमेरिका और अन्य वैश्विक शक्तियों के बीच तनाव से गहराई से जुड़ा है।
- For India, the issue reflects the need for **balanced diplomacy, strategic autonomy and protection of trade routes** — भारत के लिए यह संतुलित कूटनीति, रणनीतिक स्वायत्तता और व्यापारिक समुद्री मार्गों की सुरक्षा की आवश्यकता को दर्शाता है।

8. Economic significance — आर्थिक महत्व

- If traffic through Hormuz is disrupted, oil prices may rise sharply — यदि होर्मुज से यातायात बाधित होता है, तो तेल की कीमतें तेजी से बढ़ सकती हैं।
- Higher oil and gas prices increase costs in **transport, fertilizer, electricity, aviation and household energy use** — तेल और गैस की ऊँची कीमतें परिवहन, उर्वरक, बिजली, विमानन और घरेलू ऊर्जा उपयोग की लागत बढ़ा देती हैं।
- India, being a large energy-importing country, may face **imported inflation and pressure on the current account** — भारत जैसे बड़े ऊर्जा-आयातक देश को आयातित महँगाई और चालू खाते पर दबाव झेलना पड़ सकता है।
- Insurance premiums and freight rates for ships can also rise during conflict — संघर्ष के समय जहाजों के लिए बीमा प्रीमियम और मालभाड़ा दरें भी बढ़ सकती हैं।

9. Strategic importance for India — भारत के लिए सामरिक महत्व

- India's concern is not limited to crude oil; it also includes **LNG, LPG, ports, cargo movement and Indian seafarers** — भारत की चिंता केवल कच्चे तेल तक सीमित नहीं, बल्कि **LNG, LPG, बंदरगाह, कार्गो आवाजाही और भारतीय नाविकों** से भी जुड़ी है।
- Western Indian ports such as **Mundra and other energy-handling ports** become especially important in such situations — ऐसी परिस्थितियों में **मुंद्रा जैसे पश्चिमी भारतीय बंदरगाह** विशेष रूप से महत्वपूर्ण हो जाते हैं।
- This issue also shows why maritime security is a major part of India's national security thinking — यह मुद्दा दिखाता है कि समुद्री सुरक्षा भारत की राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा सोच का महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा क्यों है।

Iran hits Gulf energy sites after attack on its gas field; Tehran's intel chief killed

Stanly Johny

Iran on Wednesday night struck oil facilities in Persian Gulf countries, following the U.S. and Israeli strikes on gas facilities in Iran's southern Bushehr province. This came hours after Israeli air strikes killed Iran's Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib, the third high-profile assassination in 24 hours.

"Moments ago, parts of the gas facilities located in the South Pars Special Economic Energy Zone in Asaluyeh were struck by projectiles fired by the American-Zionist enemy," Iranian state television reported. The South Pars/North Dome mega-field is the largest known gas reserve in the world. Iran had earlier warned that any attack on its energy infrastructure would trigger retaliatory strikes at energy facilities in the region.

Qatar's state-run energy company said that fires set by Iranian strikes on its main gas facility had caused "extensive damage". "QatarEnergy confirms that Ras Laffan Industrial City this evening has been the subject of missile attacks," the firm said in a statement. "All personnel have been accounted for and no casualties have been reported at this time."

Qatar said that attacks were a "direct threat to its national security". "Qatar considers this assault a dangerous escalation, a flagrant violation of its sovereignty, and a direct threat to its national security," the



Sea of mourners: People at the funeral of Iranian security chief Ali Larjani in Tehran on Wednesday. REUTERS

Gulf state's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

According to late night reports, a second round of loud explosions rang out over Riyadh, after authorities previously said they intercepted four missiles.

Iran's Khatam Al-Anblya military command earlier said in a statement that it would "severely strike the source of the aggression and consider targeting the fuel, energy and gas infrastructure" of the countries from which the attacks were launched. Iran says the U.S. is using its bases in the Persian Gulf monarchies to launch its attacks.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps had issued "urgent evacuation" orders for people living near key energy production facilities in the Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE.

According to Iran's Oil Ministry, U.S.-Israeli air strikes targeted parts of the refinery installations in Asaluyeh that process natural gas from South Pars, located on the maritime border between Iran and Qatar. "We have repeatedly warned your leaders

against following this dangerous path and dragging their peoples into a major gamble with their fate," the IRGC said.

Slew of assassinations

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian confirmed that Khatib had been killed. "The cowardly assassination of my dear colleagues Esmail Khatib, Ali Larjani, and Aziz Nasirzadeh, alongside some of their family members and accompanying team, has left us in deep mourning," he wrote in a social media post.

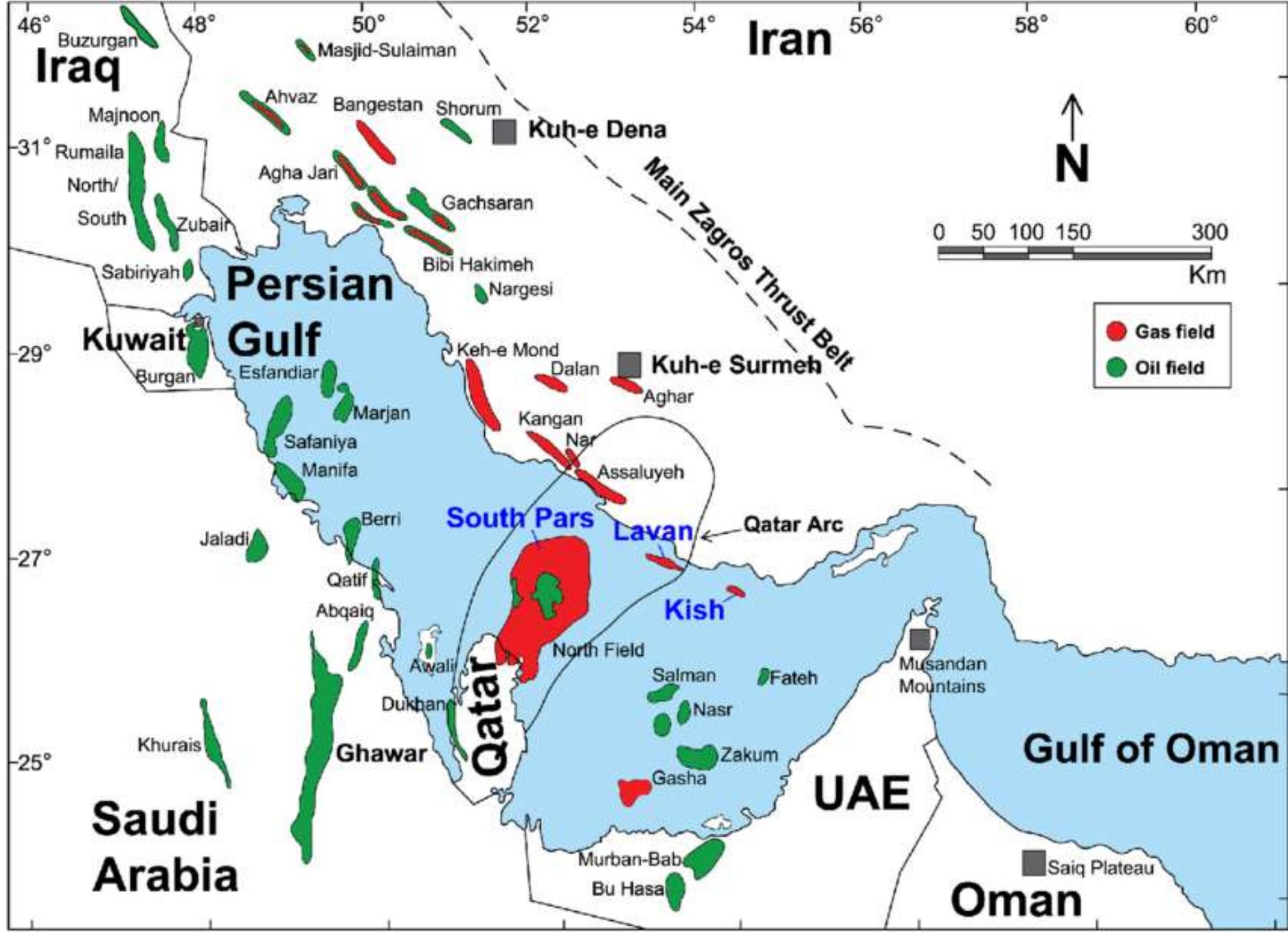
In separate strikes on Monday night, Israel had killed Larjani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and Gholamreza Soleimani, commander of the Basij paramilitary forces.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has "authorised the IDF to [assassinate] any senior Iranian figure without the need for further approval," Mr. Katz said.

(With inputs from AFP)

BEIRUT BOMBED

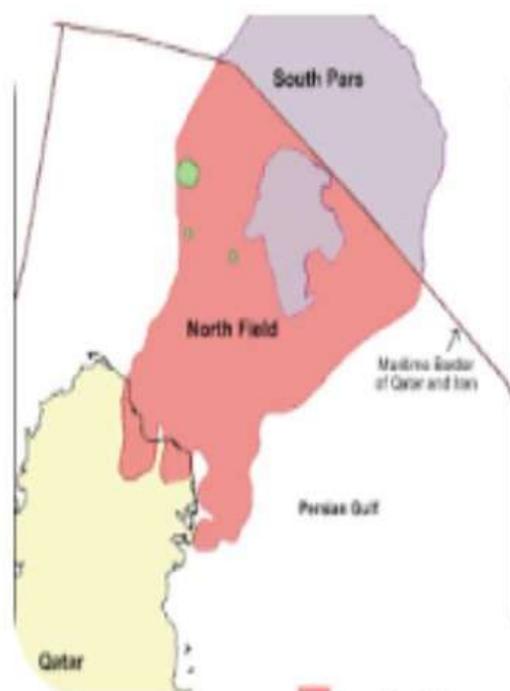
» PAGE 14







The South Pars/North Dome field is the world's largest natural gas field, located offshore in the Persian Gulf, shared between Iran (South Pars) and Qatar (North Dome). It holds roughly 1,800 trillion cubic feet of gas, providing about two-thirds of Iran's domestic gas and a massive portion of Qatar's LNG exports. [Wikipedia +4](#)





2. Why South Pars matters — साउथ पार्स इतना महत्वपूर्ण क्यों है

- South Pars is the Iranian side of the giant South Pars–North Dome system shared with Qatar, and it is widely regarded as part of the world’s largest natural gas field — साउथ पार्स, कतर के साथ साझा विशाल साउथ पार्स–नॉर्थ डोम तंत्र का ईरानी हिस्सा है, और इसे दुनिया के सबसे बड़े प्राकृतिक गैस क्षेत्र का हिस्सा माना जाता है।

AP News +2

- On the Qatari side, the same field is called the North Field/North Dome, which supports Qatar’s LNG dominance — कतरी पक्ष में यही क्षेत्र नॉर्थ फील्ड/नॉर्थ डोम कहलाता है, जो कतर की LNG प्रधानता का आधार है।

AP News +1

- Reuters reported that Iran holds about one-third of this shared field and uses most of its gas domestically because sanctions and technical limits have constrained exports — रॉयटर्स के अनुसार ईरान इस साझा क्षेत्र का लगभग एक-तिहाई हिस्सा रखता है और प्रतिबंधों तथा तकनीकी सीमाओं के कारण अपने अधिकांश गैस उत्पादन का घरेलू उपयोग करता है।

Reuters

3. What happened in the Gulf after that — उसके बाद खाड़ी क्षेत्र में क्या हुआ

- Iran issued warnings about possible retaliation against energy infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar, and later strikes affected facilities linked to Gulf energy systems — ईरान ने सऊदी अरब, यूएई और कतर के ऊर्जा ढांचे पर संभावित प्रतिशोध की चेतावनी दी, और बाद में खाड़ी ऊर्जा तंत्र से जुड़े ठिकाने प्रभावित हुए।

Reuters +1

- Reuters reported extensive damage at Qatar’s Ras Laffan energy hub after Iranian missile attacks, while the UAE also reported incidents at gas and oil facilities caused by falling debris from intercepted missiles — रॉयटर्स के अनुसार ईरानी मिसाइल हमलों के बाद कतर के रास लाफान ऊर्जा केंद्र में व्यापक क्षति हुई, जबकि यूएई ने भी रोकी गई मिसाइलों के मलबे से गैस और तेल स्थलों पर घटनाओं की सूचना दी।

Reuters

- This means the conflict was no longer confined to Iran and Israel alone; it began threatening the wider Gulf energy architecture — इसका अर्थ है कि संघर्ष केवल ईरान और इज़राइल तक सीमित नहीं रहा, बल्कि पूरे खाड़ी ऊर्जा ढांचे को खतरे में डालने लगा।

Reuters +1

4. Global energy impact — वैश्विक ऊर्जा प्रभाव

- Reuters reported Brent crude rising above \$107–108 per barrel during the escalation, reflecting fears of supply disruption — रॉयटर्स के अनुसार इस तनाव के दौरान ब्रेंट कच्चे तेल का भाव \$107–108 प्रति बैरल से ऊपर गया, जो आपूर्ति बाधा की आशंका को दिखाता है। Reuters +1
- AP reported that fears around gas supply also pushed European gas prices higher — एपी के अनुसार गैस आपूर्ति को लेकर चिंता के कारण यूरोप में गैस कीमतें भी बढ़ीं। AP News
- Because Gulf facilities process crude, condensate and LNG, attacks there can affect shipping, refining, insurance, freight costs and downstream inflation across many countries — क्योंकि खाड़ी के ये केंद्र कच्चा तेल, कंडेन्सेट और LNG संसाधित करते हैं, इसलिए वहाँ हमले होने पर शिपिंग, रिफाइनिंग, बीमा, मालभाड़ा और कई देशों में बाद की महँगाई प्रभावित हो सकती है। Reuters +2

Extra historical, political, economic and geographical facts

5. Geographical facts — भौगोलिक तथ्य

- South Pars lies off Iran's southern coast in the Persian Gulf, near Asaluyeh in Bushehr province — साउथ पार्स ईरान के दक्षिणी तट के पास पर्शियन गल्फ में, बुशेहर प्रांत के असालुयेह क्षेत्र के निकट स्थित है। Reuters +1
- The gas field is offshore and shared by Iran and Qatar, making it a classic example of a transboundary energy resource — यह गैस क्षेत्र समुद्र में स्थित है और ईरान-कतर द्वारा साझा किया जाता है, इसलिए यह सीमापार ऊर्जा संसाधन का प्रमुख उदाहरण है। AP News +1
- The Persian Gulf itself is one of the most strategic hydrocarbon regions in the world — पर्शियन गल्फ स्वयं दुनिया के सबसे सामरिक हाइड्रोकार्बन क्षेत्रों में से एक है। Reuters +1

7. Historical significance — ऐतिहासिक महत्व

- The Gulf region has long been central to global energy politics because of its oil and gas reserves and export infrastructure — तेल और गैस भंडार तथा निर्यात ढांचे के कारण खाड़ी क्षेत्र लंबे समय से वैश्विक ऊर्जा राजनीति का केंद्र रहा है। Reuters +1
- Repeated tensions involving sanctions, tanker incidents and regional rivalries have historically made this area highly sensitive — प्रतिबंधों, टैंकर घटनाओं और क्षेत्रीय प्रतिद्वंद्विताओं ने ऐतिहासिक रूप से इस क्षेत्र को अत्यंत संवेदनशील बनाया है। Reuters +1
- The present episode fits that broader pattern: strategic resources become targets when geopolitical confrontation escalates — वर्तमान घटना उसी व्यापक पैटर्न में फिट बैठती है, जिसमें भू-राजनीतिक टकराव बढ़ने पर सामरिक संसाधन निशाना बनते हैं। Reuters +2

8. Political significance — राजनीतिक महत्व

- Energy infrastructure in the Gulf is not just an economic asset; it is also a tool of deterrence, pressure and signaling in regional conflict — खाड़ी का ऊर्जा ढांचा केवल आर्थिक संपत्ति नहीं, बल्कि क्षेत्रीय संघर्ष में प्रतिरोध, दबाव और संदेश देने का साधन भी है। Reuters +1
- When Iran threatens or strikes sites in Qatar, Saudi Arabia or the UAE, the message reaches not only these states but also global importers such as India, China, Japan and Europe — जब ईरान कतर, सऊदी अरब या यूएई के ठिकानों को धमकाता या निशाना बनाता है, तो संदेश केवल इन राज्यों तक नहीं बल्कि भारत, चीन, जापान और यूरोप जैसे वैश्विक आयातकों तक भी पहुँचता है। Reuters +2
- The killing of a senior Iranian intelligence figure also shows that the confrontation has become leadership-centric, not just infrastructure-centric — किसी वरिष्ठ ईरानी खुफिया अधिकारी की हत्या यह भी दिखाती है कि टकराव केवल अवसंरचना-केंद्रित नहीं, बल्कि नेतृत्व-केंद्रित भी हो चुका है। AP News

9. Economic significance — आर्थिक महत्व

- Iran is OPEC's third-largest oil producer, according to Reuters' March 2026 infrastructure overview — रॉयटर्स की मार्च 2026 अवसंरचना रिपोर्ट के अनुसार ईरान ओपेक का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा तेल उत्पादक है। Reuters
- Reuters also reported that Iran exports most of its crude via Kharg Island through the Strait of Hormuz, showing how tightly production and maritime security are linked — रॉयटर्स ने यह भी बताया कि ईरान अपना अधिकांश कच्चा तेल होर्मुज मार्ग से खार्ग द्वीप के जरिए निर्यात करता है, जिससे उत्पादन और समुद्री सुरक्षा के गहरे संबंध स्पष्ट होते हैं। Reuters
- Any prolonged disruption in the Gulf can increase global fuel costs, shipping costs and inflationary pressure, especially in energy-importing countries — खाड़ी क्षेत्र में लंबी बाधा वैश्विक ईंधन लागत, शिपिंग लागत और महँगाई के दबाव को बढ़ा सकती है, विशेषकर ऊर्जा-आयातक देशों में। Reuters +1

Important exam facts

- South Pars and North Dome are two sides of the same giant gas field shared by Iran and Qatar — साउथ पार्स और नॉर्थ डोम ईरान और कतर द्वारा साझा किए गए एक ही विशाल गैस क्षेत्र के दो हिस्से हैं। AP News +1
- South Pars is on the Iranian side, while North Dome/North Field is on the Qatari side — साउथ पार्स ईरानी हिस्से में है, जबकि नॉर्थ डोम/नॉर्थ फील्ड कतरी हिस्से में है। AP News +1
- Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea — स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज पर्शियन गल्फ को गल्फ ऑफ ओमान और अरब सागर से जोड़ता है। U.S. Energy Infor...
- It lies between Iran and Oman — यह ईरान और ओमान के बीच स्थित है। U.S. Energy Infor...
- Ras Laffan in Qatar is one of the world's most important LNG hubs — कतर का रास लाफान दुनिया के सबसे महत्वपूर्ण LNG केंद्रों में से एक है। Reuters +1

IN BRIEF



Modi, Kuwait Crown Prince discuss West Asia over call

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday... Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday, on a telephonic conversation, exchanged views on the evolving situation in West Asia with Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Fahad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and said ensuring safe and free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz remained the foremost priority. The two leaders agreed that sustained diplomatic engagement remained essential for regional peace and stability. The Prime Minister reiterated India's condemnation of attacks on Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Mr. Modi also thanked the Crown Prince for the continued support for the safety and well-being of the Indian community in Kuwait.

Meta moves HC against CCPA fine over walkie-talkie sale

Meta on Wednesday challenged in the Delhi High Court a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) order imposing a 100 lakh penalty on it for alleged unauthorised sale and listing of walkie-talkies on the Facebook Marketplace. Meta's counsel submitted that, unlike Amazon and Flipkart, Facebook was not an e-market but merely a "notice board", and therefore, the CCPA has no jurisdiction over it. The court posted Meta's petition for hearing on March 29, asking it to explain how the order can be termed "without jurisdiction". It also asked Meta why the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission cannot consider the issue.

Are sale of books, making of prasadam by temples industrial activities, asks SC

Krishnamoorti Halagappa, New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned whether activities such as publication and sale of books and manufacture and listing of food associated with temples can be considered an industry. The oral observation came from Justice B.V. Nagarathna, who is part of a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, examining the ambit of the definition of "industry" under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, and an "establishment" under the Shops and Establishments Act. Justice Nagarathna said she had authored a single-judge bench judgment in the Karnataka High Court which had held that a tem-

China-bound Russian oil tanker diverted to India

Agua Titan, carrying 77 lakh barrels of crude, makes U-turn in Southeast Asia to reach Mangalore port on Friday; analyst says ship is a part of the dark fleet mostly controlled by the Russian state

Debabrata Tewari, Anil Kumar Saxena, Chennai: MANGALORE

A crude oil tanker that set sail from Primorsk in Russia for Indian port in China has changed course in Southeast Asia and is now heading towards the New Mangalore port with 1.1 lakh tonnes (7.7 lakh barrels) of crude, reveals a shipping tracking data. The ship is expected to reach Mangalore on March 20.

According to maritime traffic.com, Agua Titan, a Cameroon-registered tanker, left the Russian port on January 18. It anchored at Port Suez and departed on February 21, showed vessel movement.

Sources in the New Mangalore Port Authority (NMPT) said the Agua Titan arrival would boost the confidence of the refinery. Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd. (MRPL) said with one tanker already discharging Russian Urals crude to the port, the Government... so the transparency is even more. Eventually, the dark fleet vessels are controlled by the Russian state in the end, said Erik Grundt, senior analyst, Hystad Energy, an energy intelligence company based in Norway. He said the vessel made a U-turn in mid-March after the U.S. said it had imposed a Russian crude for 30 days.

Usually, chartered ships do not change course midway. But the Agua Titan is a sanctioned vessel. "This is a highly sanctioned fleet owned by the Russian government... so the transparency is even more. Eventually, the dark fleet vessels are controlled by the Russian state in the end," said Erik Grundt, senior analyst, Hystad Energy, an energy intelligence company based in Norway. He said the vessel made a U-turn in mid-March after the U.S. said it had imposed a Russian crude for 30 days.



A tanker discharging crude oil at the Single Point Mooring of New Mangalore Port dedicated to MRPL off Mangalore. T. S. MOORTHY

Primorsk usually take the route via Suez Canal to reach India's west coast on the Arabian Sea. But shipping tracking website said the Agua Titan was seen in North Europe and West Europe in January, South Asia in February, Southeast Asia and Singapore Strait in March, indicating that it circumvented the Suez Canal. The ship is a sanctioned vessel. "This is a highly sanctioned fleet owned by the Russian government... so the transparency is even more. Eventually, the dark fleet vessels are controlled by the Russian state in the end," said Erik Grundt, senior analyst, Hystad Energy, an energy intelligence company based in Norway. He said the vessel made a U-turn in mid-March after the U.S. said it had imposed a Russian crude for 30 days.

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While one oil tanker with 1.36 lakh tonnes of crude left Yanbu on Tuesday, another was being loaded with 2.6 lakh tonnes of crude for Mangalore. With crude from two Russian tankers and two from Saudi Arabia, the MRPL will have enough stock. The refinery, with an installed capacity of refining 18.2 million tonnes of crude per annum, roughly requires about 1.5 million tonnes of crude a month. The refinery, with an installed capacity of refining 18.2 million tonnes of crude per annum, roughly requires about 1.5 million tonnes of crude a month. The refinery, with an installed capacity of refining 18.2 million tonnes of crude per annum, roughly requires about 1.5 million tonnes of crude a month.

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Centre tells airlines to curb extra fees for seat selection

Jagriti Chandra, New Delhi

The Civil Aviation Ministry has directed airlines to make at least 60% of seats on every flight available for selection at no additional cost beyond the air fare, following concerns that passengers were increasingly being charged for seat allocation.

Passengers booked under the same Passenger Name Record (PNR) must be seated together, the Ministry said in a statement. This is aimed at preventing situations where families, particularly those travelling with children, are forced to pay extra to secure adjacent seats.

"Urgent intervention" The Ministry has also asked airlines and booking agents to clearly and prominently display passenger entitlements in case of delays, cancellations, and baggage loss. This information must be made accessible at booking counters as well as during the travel process. It said it had to improve transparency and passenger awareness.

The directions come as the Supreme Court is hearing a public interest litigation seeking regulatory guidelines to curb sharp fluctuations in air fares and



Airlines must not have to pay extra for adjacent seats, the ministry said.

ancillary charges imposed by airlines, during a hearing on February 23, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mishra granted the Centre four weeks to complete its deliberations and inform the court of the outcome.

The matter is scheduled to be heard next on March 23. The plea, filed by social activist S. Lakshminarayana, calls for the establishment of a robust and independent regulator to ensure transparency and passenger protection across the civil aviation sector. It argued that the State's inaction in regulating fare algorithms, cancellation policies, service continuity, and grievance mechanisms amounted to a deviation of its constitutional duty, warranting urgent judicial intervention.

India showing steady progress in reducing child deaths amid slowing global gains: report

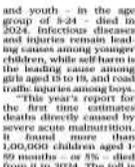
Hindu Shahin, New Delhi

An estimated 4.9 million children died before their fifth birthday in 2024 worldwide, including 2.2 million newborns, according to the latest estimates released by a UN report on child mortality. The report, released on Wednesday, said that most of these deaths were preventable with proven, low-cost interventions, and access to quality health services.

The report titled "Levels and Trends in Child Mortality" added that under-five deaths globally have fallen by more than half since 2000. However, since 2018, this pace has slowed by more than 60%. However, India is among the countries demonstrating steady progress in reducing child

mortality through sustained public health efforts. The latest United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UNGME) report, UNGME states that the rate of neonatal mortality rate reduction in India has shown progress. The United Health Ministry said that India, over the past two decades, has played a pivotal role in reducing child mortality in the South Asia region. "Most of it is credited to the release, said that the Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) recorded a decline since 1990. In 1990, India had an NMR of 57 per 1,000 live births, which fell to 17 in 2024.

The UN report found that an estimated 2.1 million children, adolescents, and youth - in the age group of 1-19 - died in 2024. Infectious diseases and injuries remain leading causes among younger children, while self-harm is the leading cause among girls aged 15 to 19, and road traffic injuries among boys. "This year's report for the first time estimates deaths directly caused by severe acute malnutrition. It found more than 400,000 children aged 5-99 months - or 5% - died from it. The figure is far greater when indirect effects are considered, as malnutrition weakens children's immunity and increases their risk of dying from common childhood diseases," the report by the UNGME states. Mortality data also frequently fail to capture severe acute malnutrition as an underlying cause of



Under-5 deaths dropped from 127 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 17 in 2024.

death, suggesting the burden is likely substantially underestimated. Some of the countries with the highest numbers of direct deaths from severe acute malnutrition include Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan. Neonatal deaths account for nearly half of all under-five deaths. Leading causes of newborn deaths were complications from preterm birth (36%), and complications during labour and delivery (23%). Beyond the first month, infectious diseases, including malaria, diarrhoea, and pneumonia were major killers. Malaria remains the single largest killer in this age group (17%), with most deaths occurring in endemic areas of sub-Saharan Africa. In 2024, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 38% of all under-five deaths.

Crossword puzzle with 14745 clues and solutions. Clues include: 1. Involves spending time on good books occasionally to relax (6), 2. Group or cup is widely for cooking (7, 6, 2), 3. Not involved in carbon taxation (6), 4. Female disapproval of 'yes, interplay' (6), 5. Make something really as possible (4, 3), 6. Use nice grand solution for upgrading race (6), 7. India's first team superstar (10), 8. Nicky rating possible for Brian Venemuth (10). Solutions include: 1. Juvenile worker's small trip with nuffan, going north (4, 2), 2. Accommodating before greeting for shelter (6), 3. Lower well-known great company (6), 4. Personal article in Europe Italy (2, 4), 5. Software security flaw is still about (shorter) doctor (4, 4), 6. Inspiration for a great - a book set from America (6), 7. Firm and devoted (6, 7), 8. Regularly sweet to get established (6), 9. Centre is also half of that (5), 10. Cold, dishonest and lusted (6), 11. See rapid changes in jet's pace (6), 12. High, without someone's position (5), 13. Unfair and completely overvalued by depression after setting (6), 14. A strong hand devoted to gratify (4, 4).

Sudoku puzzle with 4x4 grid and solutions. Clues include: 1. Involves spending time on good books occasionally to relax (6), 2. Group or cup is widely for cooking (7, 6, 2), 3. Not involved in carbon taxation (6), 4. Female disapproval of 'yes, interplay' (6), 5. Make something really as possible (4, 3), 6. Use nice grand solution for upgrading race (6), 7. India's first team superstar (10), 8. Nicky rating possible for Brian Venemuth (10). Solutions include: 1. Juvenile worker's small trip with nuffan, going north (4, 2), 2. Accommodating before greeting for shelter (6), 3. Lower well-known great company (6), 4. Personal article in Europe Italy (2, 4), 5. Software security flaw is still about (shorter) doctor (4, 4), 6. Inspiration for a great - a book set from America (6), 7. Firm and devoted (6, 7), 8. Regularly sweet to get established (6), 9. Centre is also half of that (5), 10. Cold, dishonest and lusted (6), 11. See rapid changes in jet's pace (6), 12. High, without someone's position (5), 13. Unfair and completely overvalued by depression after setting (6), 14. A strong hand devoted to gratify (4, 4).

Madhurakavi Azhwar's quest. Text: Madhurakavi Azhwar was born in Thirukkolur in Tamil Nadu. He had studied the vedas, but could not fully comprehend them, said V. Karunakarachariar in a discourse. So, he began to seek a preceptor to guide him. His journey northwards, looking for a spiritual guru. His aim was to travel all the way to the Himalayas, and find the preceptor teacher. He halted at Ayodhya and performed evening rituals. This involved offering worship to the four directions. He faced east first, and offered his salutations to the east. He then faced south, west and finally north in pay his obeisance to the directions. But when he faced the southern direction, he noticed a bright light, which he did not find in any of the other directions. He took this as an indication that the guru he sought lived in the south. He gave up his plan to go to the Himalayan region, but turned back towards the south. He kept following the light, and eventually reached a place called Thirukkaragudi. The people of the village told Madhurakavi Azhwar about a boy whose behaviour was quite extraordinary. This boy had never eaten anything for sustenance. He had never cried even as a baby, and was always in meditation. Madhurakavi Azhwar felt this boy might be the guru he was looking for, and he visited the town where in which the boy lived. Madhurakavi asked him a Vedic question. Until then the boy had never responded to anyone. But now he gave a reply to Madhurakavi Azhwar's question, and it was a reply that stunned the father. Madhurakavi Azhwar realised that the boy was his shishya. That boy was none other than the great Vaishnavite saint Nammarvar, revered by Sri Vaishnavas.

India showing steady progress in reducing child deaths amid slowing global gains: report

Bindu Shajan Perappadan

NEW DELHI

An estimated 4.9 million children died before their fifth birthday in 2024 worldwide, including 2.3 million newborns, according to the latest estimates released by a UN report on child mortality. The report, released on Wednesday, said that most of these deaths were preventable with proven, low-cost interventions, and access to quality healthcare.

The report titled "Levels and Trends in Child Mortality" added that under-five deaths globally have fallen by more than half since 2000. However, since 2015, this pace has slowed by more than 60%.

However, India is among the countries demonstrating steady progress in reducing child

mortality through sustained public health efforts. The latest United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UNIGME) Report, 2025 states that the status of neonatal mortality rate reduction in India has shown progress.

The Union Health Ministry added that India, over the past two decades, has played a pivotal role in reducing child mortality in the South Asia region.

The Ministry, in its release, said that the Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) recorded a decline since 1990. In 1990, India had an NMR of 57 per 1,000 live births, which fell to 17 in 2024.

Also, the Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) witnessed a sharp fall – in 1990, the U5MR stood at 127 per 1,000 live births,



Under-5 deaths dropped from 127 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 27 in 2024.

while in 2024, it declined to 27.

"This sharp reduction is due to targeted public health interventions, improved institutional delivery systems, and expanded immunisation coverage," the Ministry said.

The UN report found that an estimated 2.1 million children, adolescents,

and youth - in the age group of 5-24 - died in 2024. Infectious diseases and injuries remain leading causes among younger children, while self-harm is the leading cause among girls aged 15 to 19, and road traffic injuries among boys.

"This year's report for the first time estimates deaths directly caused by severe acute malnutrition. It found more than 1,00,000 children aged 1-59 months – or 5% – died from it in 2024. The toll is far greater when indirect effects are considered, as malnutrition weakens children's immunity and increases their risk of dying from common childhood diseases," the report by the UNIGME states.

Mortality data also frequently fail to capture severe acute malnutrition as an underlying cause of

death, suggesting the burden is likely substantially underestimated. Some of the countries with the highest numbers of direct deaths from severe acute malnutrition include Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan.

Newborn deaths account for nearly half of all under-five deaths. Leading causes of newborn deaths were complications from preterm birth (36%), and complications during labour and delivery (21%).

Beyond the first month, infectious diseases, including malaria, diarrhoea, and pneumonia were major killers. Malaria remained the single largest killer in this age group (17%), with most deaths occurring in endemic areas of sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2024, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 58% of all under-five deaths.

1. Main report finding — मुख्य रिपोर्ट निष्कर्ष

- India is showing steady progress in reducing child deaths, even as global improvement in child mortality is slowing down — भारत बाल मृत्यु दर कम करने में लगातार प्रगति दिखा रहा है, जबकि वैश्विक स्तर पर बाल मृत्यु में सुधार की गति धीमी पड़ रही है।
- The report says about **4.9 million children** died before their fifth birthday worldwide in 2024, including **2.3 million newborns** — रिपोर्ट के अनुसार 2024 में विश्वभर में लगभग **4.9 मिलियन बच्चों** की पाँच वर्ष की आयु से पहले मृत्यु हुई, जिनमें **2.3 मिलियन नवजात** शामिल थे।
- Most of these deaths were said to be **preventable** through proven, low-cost interventions and better access to quality healthcare — इनमें से अधिकांश मौतें **रोकथाम योग्य** बताई गई हैं, यदि प्रमाणित, कम-लागत उपाय और बेहतर स्वास्थ्य सेवाएँ उपलब्ध हों।

2. Global trend — वैश्विक रुझान

- Under-five deaths globally have fallen by more than half since 2000 — वर्ष 2000 के बाद वैश्विक स्तर पर पाँच वर्ष से कम आयु के बच्चों की मृत्यु आधे से अधिक घट चुकी है।
- However, since 2015, the pace of decline has slowed by more than 60% — लेकिन 2015 के बाद गिरावट की गति 60% से अधिक धीमी पड़ गई है।
- This means progress is continuing, but not fast enough to meet child survival goals comfortably — इसका अर्थ है कि प्रगति जारी है, पर बाल-जीवन रक्षा लक्ष्यों को आसानी से पाने जितनी तेज़ नहीं है।

3. India's performance — भारत का प्रदर्शन

- India is among the countries showing steady progress in reducing child mortality through sustained public health efforts — भारत उन देशों में है जो निरंतर जन-स्वास्थ्य प्रयासों के माध्यम से बाल मृत्यु दर कम करने में स्थिर प्रगति दिखा रहे हैं।
- Over the past two decades, India has played a major role in reducing child mortality in South Asia — पिछले दो दशकों में भारत ने दक्षिण एशिया में बाल मृत्यु दर कम करने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है।
- The report highlights improvement in both **Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR)** and **Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR)** — रिपोर्ट में नवजात मृत्यु दर (NMR) और पाँच वर्ष से कम आयु मृत्यु दर (U5MR) दोनों में सुधार दिखाया गया है।

4. India's neonatal mortality reduction — भारत में नवजात मृत्यु दर में गिरावट

- India's **Neonatal Mortality Rate** declined from **57 per 1,000 live births in 1990** to **17 in 2024** — भारत की नवजात मृत्यु दर 1990 में प्रति 1,000 जीवित जन्म पर 57 से घटकर 2024 में 17 हो गई।
- This reflects long-term improvement in maternal and newborn health systems — यह मातृ एवं नवजात स्वास्थ्य तंत्र में दीर्घकालिक सुधार को दर्शाता है।
- Better institutional deliveries, immunisation and targeted public health interventions are seen as major reasons — बेहतर संस्थागत प्रसव, टीकाकरण और लक्षित जन-स्वास्थ्य हस्तक्षेप इसके प्रमुख कारण माने गए हैं।

5. India's under-5 mortality reduction — भारत में पाँच वर्ष से कम आयु मृत्यु दर में गिरावट

- India's **Under-5 Mortality Rate** fell sharply from **127 per 1,000 live births in 1990** to **27 in 2024** — भारत की पाँच वर्ष से कम आयु मृत्यु दर 1990 में प्रति 1,000 जीवित जन्म पर 127 से घटकर 2024 में 27 हो गई।
- This is a major public health achievement over three decades — यह तीन दशकों में सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य की बड़ी उपलब्धि है।
- The fall suggests stronger immunisation, better child healthcare access and improved survival in early childhood — यह गिरावट अधिक टीकाकरण, बेहतर बाल स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं और शुरुआती बचपन में बढ़ी जीवित रहने की संभावना को दर्शाती है।

6. Why India improved — भारत में सुधार क्यों हुआ

- The article attributes this decline to **targeted public health interventions** — लेख के अनुसार इस गिरावट का एक कारण **लक्षित जन-स्वास्थ्य हस्तक्षेप** हैं।
- It also mentions **improved institutional delivery systems** — इसमें **संस्थागत प्रसव प्रणाली में सुधार** का भी उल्लेख है।
- Expanded **immunisation coverage** has also been an important factor — **टीकाकरण कवरेज का विस्तार** भी एक महत्वपूर्ण कारण रहा है।
- Together, these steps reduced preventable deaths among newborns and young children — इन सभी कदमों ने नवजातों और छोटे बच्चों में रोकੀ जा सकने वाली मौतों को कम किया।

7. Child and youth deaths beyond age 5 — पाँच वर्ष से ऊपर बच्चों और युवाओं की मृत्यु

- An estimated 2.1 million children, adolescents and youth aged 5–24 years died in 2024 — 2024 में 5–24 वर्ष आयु वर्ग के लगभग 2.1 मिलियन बच्चों, किशोरों और युवाओं की मृत्यु हुई।
- Among younger children, **infectious diseases and injuries** remained leading causes — कम आयु के बच्चों में **संक्रामक रोग और चोटें** प्रमुख कारण बने रहे।
- Among girls aged 15–19, **self-harm** was the leading cause — 15–19 वर्ष की लड़कियों में **self-harm** प्रमुख कारण रहा।
- Among boys, **road traffic injuries** were major causes — लड़कों में **सड़क दुर्घटनाएँ** प्रमुख कारणों में रहीं।

8. Malnutrition as a hidden killer — कुपोषण एक छिपा हुआ कारण

- For the first time, the report estimates deaths directly caused by **severe acute malnutrition** — पहली बार रिपोर्ट ने **गंभीर तीव्र कुपोषण** से सीधे होने वाली मौतों का आकलन किया है।
- It estimates that over **100,000 children aged 1–59 months**, or around 5%, died from it in 2024 — रिपोर्ट के अनुसार 2024 में 1–59 माह आयु के 1 लाख से अधिक बच्चों, यानी लगभग 5%, की मृत्यु इससे हुई।
- The report suggests the real burden may be higher because malnutrition is often missed as an underlying cause of death — रिपोर्ट संकेत देती है कि वास्तविक बोझ इससे अधिक हो सकता है, क्योंकि कुपोषण को अक्सर मृत्यु के मूल कारण के रूप में दर्ज नहीं किया जाता।
- Malnutrition weakens immunity and raises the risk of death from common childhood diseases — कुपोषण रोग प्रतिरोधक क्षमता को कम करता है और सामान्य बाल रोगों से मृत्यु का जोखिम बढ़ाता है।

9. Major causes of newborn deaths — नवजात मृत्यु के प्रमुख कारण

- Newborn deaths account for nearly **half of all under-5 deaths** — नवजात मृत्यु कुल पाँच वर्ष से कम आयु मौतों का लगभग आधा हिस्सा हैं।
- The leading cause was **complications from preterm birth (36%)** — प्रमुख कारण समयपूर्व जन्म की जटिलताएँ (36%) थीं।
- The second major cause was **complications during labour and delivery (21%)** — दूसरा प्रमुख कारण प्रसव और जन्म प्रक्रिया के दौरान जटिलताएँ (21%) थीं।
- This shows that maternal healthcare and safe delivery systems are critical to reducing neonatal mortality — इससे स्पष्ट है कि नवजात मृत्यु दर कम करने के लिए मातृ स्वास्थ्य और सुरक्षित प्रसव व्यवस्था अत्यंत आवश्यक है।

10. Major causes after the newborn stage — नवजात अवधि के बाद मृत्यु के प्रमुख कारण

- After the first month, major killers included **malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia** — पहले महीने के बाद प्रमुख कारणों में मलेरिया, डायरिया और निमोनिया शामिल रहे।
- Malaria remained the **single largest killer** in this age group at **17%**, mostly in endemic regions of sub-Saharan Africa — इस आयु वर्ग में मलेरिया 17% के साथ सबसे बड़ा एकल कारण रहा, विशेषकर उप-सहारा अफ्रीका के स्थानिक क्षेत्रों में।
- This underlines the link between child survival, public health systems and disease control programmes — यह बाल-जीवन रक्षा, जन-स्वास्थ्य व्यवस्था और रोग नियंत्रण कार्यक्रमों के बीच संबंध को रेखांकित करता है।

11. Regional pattern — क्षेत्रीय पैटर्न

- In 2024, **sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 58% of all under-5 deaths** — 2024 में उप-सहारा अफ्रीका में कुल पाँच वर्ष से कम आयु मौतों का 58% दर्ज हुआ।
 - Countries with high direct deaths from severe acute malnutrition included **Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan** — गंभीर तीव्र कुपोषण से अधिक प्रत्यक्ष मौतों वाले देशों में **पाकिस्तान, सोमालिया और सूडान** शामिल थे।
 - This shows that child mortality is closely linked with poverty, food insecurity, weak health systems and conflict — इससे स्पष्ट है कि बाल मृत्यु गरीबी, खाद्य असुरक्षा, कमजोर स्वास्थ्य तंत्र और संघर्ष से गहराई से जुड़ी है।
-

Extra facts important for exam

12. Key concepts — प्रमुख अवधारणाएँ

- **Neonatal Mortality Rate** means deaths within the first 28 days of life per 1,000 live births — **नवजात मृत्यु दर** का अर्थ है जीवन के पहले 28 दिनों के भीतर प्रति 1,000 जीवित जन्म पर होने वाली मौतें।
- **Under-5 Mortality Rate** means the probability of dying before age five per 1,000 live births — **पाँच वर्ष से कम आयु मृत्यु दर** का अर्थ है पाँच वर्ष की आयु से पहले मृत्यु की संभावना, प्रति 1,000 जीवित जन्म के आधार पर।
- Child mortality is a major indicator of a country's **public health, nutrition and maternal care system** — बाल मृत्यु दर किसी देश की **जन-स्वास्थ्य, पोषण और मातृ देखभाल व्यवस्था** का प्रमुख संकेतक है।

Consider the following statements — निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. India's Neonatal Mortality Rate declined from 57 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 17 in 2024 — भारत की नवजात मृत्यु दर 1990 में 57 से घटकर 2024 में 17 हो गई।
2. India's Under-5 Mortality Rate declined from 127 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 27 in 2024 — भारत की पाँच वर्ष से कम आयु मृत्यु दर 1990 में 127 से घटकर 2024 में 27 हो गई।
3. Newborn deaths account for only one-fourth of all under-5 deaths — नवजात मृत्यु कुल पाँच वर्ष से कम आयु मौतों का केवल एक-चौथाई हिस्सा हैं।

Which of the statements given above are correct? — उपर्युक्त में से कौन-से कथन सही हैं?

- A. 1 and 2 only — केवल 1 और 2
- B. 2 and 3 only — केवल 2 और 3
- C. 1 and 3 only — केवल 1 और 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3 — 1, 2 और 3



No end to suffering India must enlist more support against Pakistan's bombing of Afghanistan

As the U.S. Israel war against Iran rages, in its westerly frontiers have flared up, in a form not often seen in the world, a conflict fuelled by recent clashes between Pakistan and Afghanistan forces on the Tropic of Line. On Tuesday, Pakistani aircrafts tragically killed at least 400 Afghans at a drug treatment and rehabilitation centre, which has been identified as the Taliban administration of harbouring the Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and supporting its career on Fatah, denied by Afghan officials' accusations, claiming that its strikes had only targeted "military installations". Despite the denial, it is clear from visuals that the Qandahar Rehabilitation Facility in Kabul was destroyed. In an extremely strong statement, India condemned what it called Pakistan's "cowardly" targeting of a hospital, rejecting its denial as a cover-up for a "massacre", and called for an international inquiry. The Pakistan-Afghanistan conflict, which has been simmering for over a year, escalated in February when the Pakistan Air Force struck Taliban bases in Kabul, Kandahar, and Paktia in what it called Operation Storm-141 (Hindus: Operation Fury). Tensions have also risen after TTP attacks killed 11 soldiers and a child in Bajaur and 32 people in an Islamabad mosque following a suicide bombing. Pakistan has also been targeted by closer India-Afghanistan ties and New Delhi's hosting of Taliban ministers, accusing the Taliban of turning Afghanistan into "Indian colony" — a turnaround from its support in 2020, for the Taliban's rise in power in Kabul. Apart from its continued tensions and hatred of India, and new Afghanistan, Pakistan possibly benefits from the global focus on the U.S.-Israel war with Iran. The U.S. actions here are to its advantage, presenting support for Pakistan's "right to defend itself against Taliban attacks", but also indirect Pakistan's generals with a sense of impunity to strike targets in Afghanistan at will.

New Delhi could be permitted some sense of "backlash" as Islamabad's fight against cross-border terrorism from Afghanistan mirrors India's problems with Pakistan. The constraints on Pakistan's military in a two-front situation with India and Afghanistan, compounded by a transnational war on the third front, may also be the source of some relief for India. With no dialogue with Pakistan, and the limited dialogue with a Taliban regime it deals with but does not formally recognise, India's diplomatic role in the conflict is limited. However, it must enlist other 500 members that have been concerted over the outbreak of an "open war" between Pakistan and Afghanistan, to intervene. The region is already suffering from trade, energy and travel restrictions as a result of the West Asia war, to risk more volatility and loss of lives, particularly in Afghanistan, where the vulnerable, especially women, have suffered the most.

Fire and more fire India must treat hospital fire safety as an issue of criminal accountability

Attack is not an anomaly. It is the latest entry in a ledger of preventable deaths in Indian hospitals. ICUs in 2018-19 reported 22 deaths in a fire at a private hospital ICU in Hissar, Haryana, which did not have the mandatory fire safety clearance. Following this tragic fire safety audits were made compulsory for such facilities. Last year, the Odisha government allocated about ₹20 crore for fire safety upgrades in ICUs across hospitals in the State, but this did not prevent the fire at the government's Sirsat Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack, apparently caused by a short circuit in the ICU of the trauma care unit. Some reports suggest the fire may have started in a ventilator, which was later found heavily damaged. The accident, which occurred on the evening of Monday, claimed 12 of the 23 ICU patients. Although the hospital had a firefighting unit, its personnel arrived after more than 30 minutes, reportedly because staff did not alert them early. Additionally, the fire hydrants could not be operated by staff. Nevertheless, water is not the right medium to fight electric fires, which are best extinguished using carbon dioxide. A call log that requires trained personnel. Last October, six patients were killed in an ICU fire in Bhubaneswar. In 2014, nine patients died in ICU fire in Bhubaneswar. Two similar accidents were reported in Maharashtra last year. An investigation revealed hazards including expired wiring, inadequate earthing and electrical circuits not matching power load requirements — the last being a leading cause of electrical fires in India.

ICUs have intrinsic safety risks, as their oxygen-rich environment can turn even a spark into an inferno. ICUs are also packed with electrical equipment, and the personnel are not always well trained in their safe handling. State-of-the-art medical equipment comes with advanced electronics and variable frequency drives that generate what are called "harmonic currents". These currents that have become a major safety concern as they can damage sensitive equipment and have no safety devices such as circuit breakers. Harmonics create silent, persistent overheating and insulation degradation, and are a severe fire hazard. Today's electrical practice lays down that every time a new ventilator is wheeled into an ICU, the wiring, protection and load capacity must be re-evaluated. Older facilities need an electrical upgrade before cutting-edge equipment can be installed. As patients in ICUs are often sedated, intubated, and connected to machines, staff must be trained to ensure their safe evacuation. Until India treats hospital fire safety as a matter of criminal accountability rather than bureaucratic paperwork, the fire will keep burning and the bodies will keep mounting.

NCERT book ban, a chapter on judicial transparency

Mas Hoot, former Features Editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, authored the seminal book *India's Courts are Breaking Badly and the Public, to the degree it can be brought to understand that, will exert forces to reform, a reform that must be structural as well as intellectual and moral.*

He observed that the book's subtitle sums up a system in distress. The book underscores the critical role that the media and citizens must play while dealing with the judicial institution in a democracy.

In February this year, the Supreme Court of India, faulting what it felt as selective reference to corruption within the judiciary, directed "a complete library ban" on a Class eight social science textbook published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The three-judge bench, presided over by the Chief Justice of India, further alluded to "an underlying agenda to undermine the institutional authority and demean the dignity of the judiciary".

The Court subsequently ordered that the persons responsible for preparing the passages should be "disassociated" from future projects by government and public universities. The Court thus instantly punished them, without the process of hearing. The revulsion by the Court is problematic as it sends critical signals about the state of India's democracy today.

What appears to have annoyed the Bench were the passages in the book on judicial delay and corruption in the judiciary. As per the news report cited by the Court, the textbook has data on the approximate number of pending cases in Indian courts, which it states is higher than that of Judicial Conduct, which prescribes values for judicial life. It also discussed the in-house procedures evolved by the Supreme Court and the constitutional mechanism for the removal of corrupt judges.

An undermining of freedom by itself, a book ban is the most egregious form of censorship. Such a move directly impacts the right to freedom of speech under Article 19, a solemn promise in the Constitution. This right could be restricted only by a law made by the



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Shankar K. Rai is a lawyer in the Supreme Court of India.

the top court's textbook espouses gaps in judicial accountability and public trust

state on grounds expressly provided under Article 19(2), such as "the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation, or incitement to an offence". There is no law made by the state to justify the ban on the book in question. Judicial orders or judgments do not come under the purview of Article 19(2). The ban is imposed in the context of Article 19 (Article 19(2) *Mishra v State of Maharashtra*, 1980).

For access to the book to government of court, there must be material that scandalises the authority of the court or prejudices or interferes with its proceedings or the administration of justice, as defined under Section 20 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971. Whether mere references to corruption in the judiciary and case backlog meet this high threshold for criminal contempt is a question that, unfortunately, did not form part of the Court's deliberations. What was not examined was whether the statements were too general in nature to suggest any malicious intent to scandalise the Court.

Further, and importantly, going by the scheme of judicial review, courts must put to constitutional scrutiny the law passed by Parliament before violating fundamental rights. When the courts take on the task of book banning, citizens are left without remedy, as constitutional courts are the last resort to safeguard fundamental rights.

Global efforts In advanced democracies, the credibility of the court is a matter of concern, primarily for the court itself. Transparency International has conducted a study that shows that there is a prevailing notion about judicial corruption. India ranks among the world's most corrupt nations, with a score of 30 in the index. In Kenya, the reform led by Chief Justice Willy Mutunga, in 2011, led to a significant improvement in the index. During this period, institutions such as judicial conduct commissions, court user committees, and performance management committees were established.

In India, the public trust in the judiciary had risen to 65%, compared to 27% in 2009. The reform continued even thereafter. This improvement by a civil society is education and trying to address them, rather than suppressing critical voices.



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Global production has changed Against this backdrop, the MC14 offers a chance to rethink the WTO as a system that restores balance between predictability and fairness. The right balance of rights and obligations in the WTO also reflects today's reality. Emerging economies now export advanced and technology-intensive products. Digital networks are reshaping how global production is organised.

Rules designed for a late 20th century trading system cannot fully govern a 21st century one. Reform is most acute with existing credibility to enforcement. Without a functioning dispute mechanism in the WTO, its authority is in jeopardy. Members need to rebuild a binding, trusted mechanism rather than relying mainly on temporary arrangements that countries accept out of necessity. A robust dispute-resolution system helps remove politics from conflicts and keeps negotiations in a structured manner.

At the same time, predictability may go hand in hand with more dynamic and flexible rules over agricultural subsidies, market distortions and unequal openness need transparency. Developing countries argue that while WTO rules ensure the rule of law, they do not always reflect the needs of the world. Rules may be legally correct but still produce outcomes that feel unequal or discriminatory.

Reform should, therefore, improve transparency on subsidies, create credible

responses to distortive practices, and revisit special and differential treatment so that it remains meaningful in today's economic conditions.

Institutional adaptability is also important. The WTO's structures were designed for a smaller and less complex membership, which contrasts with today's deadlock. Some countries are moving ahead in smaller groups on issues such as e-commerce, investment facilitation, and services. These efforts can help progress, but they must remain transparent, inclusive and connected to the wider WTO framework. Flexibility should help the system move forward, not divide it. If such initiatives remain open to all members and eventually become part of consensus WTO rules, they can support reform instead of fragmentation.

Ultimately, WTO reform is not only technical but also a political challenge. The Multilateral Security Report warns that a world shaped mainly by transactional deals would favour the powerful and leave weaker countries vulnerable.

The choice is clear The WTO's value lies in preventing exactly this outcome by ensuring that trade is governed by rules rather than coercion. In an era of strategic competition, rules do not weaken sovereignty; they protect countries from economic domination.

The choice before the MC14 is crystal clear. Members can undertake serious reform, preserving the WTO's stabilising core while updating its rules, procedures and developmental balance, or allow the system to drift further into fragmentation. Achieving reform will require political will and shared responsibility.

Rebalancing the WTO is ultimately about securing a world in which economic interdependence is still unavoidable. If the MC14 seizes this opportunity, it can show that meaningful reform remains the most credible path to sustaining global trade governance.

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The opportunity in Cameroon to rebalance the WTO

Today, trade is no longer just about economics. It is increasingly used as a geopolitical tool. Tariffs are imposed as pressure tactics, and economic dependence is sometimes used strategically. In this context, the World Trade Organization (WTO)'s Ministerial Conference (MC14) to be held in Yaounde, Cameroon, Africa (March 26-29, 2020), comes at an important moment. The real issue is not whether the WTO needs reform, but whether it can adapt fast enough to stay relevant in a world moving toward more transactional and power-based trade relations.



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Global trade still operates under WTO rules. If enforceable multilateral rules weaken, global trade would become unpredictable and unstable. Smaller and weaker countries would suffer the most, because they rely on common rules to protect themselves from pressure by stronger economies.

The WTO's challenges are also a part of a wider shift in the global order. The Munich Security

Conference (MSC) 56, held in Munich, Germany, in January 2020, described this as a move toward "reckoning-ball politics", where countries prefer disruption and short-term deals instead of gradual institutional reform. In trade, this is visible in the rise of unilateral tariffs, economic coercion and bilateral deals that bypass multilateral commitments. If this continues, rule-based trade could be replaced by ad hoc arrangements shaped mainly by power rather than shared principles.

Reform should, therefore, improve transparency on subsidies, create credible

ground level, it is an undoubted reality that relentless war mongering by the military interventionist, autocrat in military attacks has seen an escalation in different parts of the world ever since Donald Trump took office. The White House, with the NATO alliance, has been the cold shoulder. Mr. Trump stands exposed and powerless by America's co-offender too, in inflicting unprovoked wars. The U.S. is a top aggressor that is prevalent at the

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displacement of jobs even as it creates new high-skilled roles, and ethical concerns along with cyber risks require robust governance. Financial institutions must balance innovation with responsibility, invest in workforce retraining, and prioritise transparency and ensure sustainable growth opportunities.

Responsible investment has been a powerful tool in addressing unethical practices and promoting transparency. It encourages investors to consider the social and environmental impact of their investments. This approach can help drive positive change and ensure that companies are held accountable for their actions.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kabul bombing Pakistan's action of bombing a hospital in Afghanistan is an inhuman act (Front page, March 18). Whatever may be the reasons, an attack on a hospital is indefensible. It is against the canons of international law and even the rules of war to target and attack civilians in any conflict, especially sick patients under treatment. Pakistan, which has been training and harbouring terrorists in its soil and has been waging a cross-border terrorism against India for

ing, appears to be at the increasing end on its western border. Comparatively, India has been very patient and tolerant towards Pakistan all these years. It is to be hoped that Pakistan would at least now realise the folly of creating, nurturing and harbouring terrorists and desert from such nefarious actions in future.

Kewaji Chandramauli, Hyderabad

Resignation over Iran war The resignation of Joe Kent, a counterterrorism official, in protest against the justification for American strikes on Iran, delivers a hard slap on the military interventionist, autocrat in military attacks has seen an escalation in different parts of the world ever since Donald Trump took office. The White House, with the NATO alliance, has been the cold shoulder. Mr. Trump stands exposed and powerless by America's co-offender too, in inflicting unprovoked wars. The U.S. is a top aggressor that is prevalent at the

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NCERT book ban, a chapter on judicial transparency

Max Boot, former Features Editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, authored the seminal study on the United States judiciary, 'Out of Order: Arrogance, Corruption, and Incompetence on the Bench' (1998). Robert H. Bork, former Solicitor General of the United States, wrote the foreword to it with a striking conclusion – "Our Courts are behaving badly and the public, to the degree it can be brought to understand that, will exert force for reform, a reform that must be structural as well as intellectual and moral."

He observed that the book's subtitle sums up a system in distress. The book underscores the critical role that the media and citizens must play while dealing with the judicial institution in a democracy.

In February this year, the Supreme Court of India, faulting what it felt as selective reference to corruption within the judiciary, directed "a complete blanket ban" on a Class eight social science textbook published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The three-judge Bench, presided over by the Chief Justice of India, further alluded to "an underlying agenda to undermine the institutional authority and demean the dignity of the judiciary".

The Court subsequently ordered that the persons responsible for preparing the passages should be 'disassociated' from future projects by governments and public universities. The Court thus instantly punished them, without due process or hearing. The prohibition by the Court is problematic as it sends critical signals about the shape of India's democracy today.

What appears to have annoyed the Bench were the passages in the book on judicial delay and corruption in judiciary. As per the news report cited by the Court, the textbook has data on the approximate number of pending cases in Indian courts. It refers to the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, which prescribe values for judicial life. It also discusses the in-house procedures evolved by the Supreme Court and the constitutional mechanism for the removal of errant judges.

An undermining of freedom

By itself, a book ban is the most egregious form of censorship. Such a move directly impacts the right to freedom of speech under Article 19, a solemn promise in the Constitution. This right could be restricted only by a law made by the



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is a lawyer in the Supreme Court of India

The top court's ban on an NCERT textbook exposes gaps in judicial accountability and public trust

state on grounds expressly provided under Article 19(2), such as "the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation, or incitement to an offence". There is no law made by the state to justify the ban on the book in question. Judicial orders or judgments do not come under the realm of 'law' made by the state, as understood in the context of Article 19 (*Naresh Shridhar Mirajkar vs State of Maharashtra*, 1966).

For an act to amount to contempt of court, there must be material that scandalises the authority of the court or prejudices or interferes with judicial proceedings or the administration of justice, as defined under Section 2(c) of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971. Whether mere references to corruption in the judiciary and case backlogs meet this high threshold for criminal contempt was a question that, unfortunately, did not form part of the Court's deliberations. What was also not examined was whether the statements were too general in nature to suggest any malicious intent to scandalise the Court.

Further, and importantly, going by the scheme of judicial review, courts must put to constitutional scrutiny the law passed by Parliament often violating fundamental rights. When the courts take on the task of book banning, citizens are left without remedy, as constitutional courts are the last resort to safeguard fundamental rights.

Global efforts

In advanced democracies, the credibility of the court is a matter of concern, primarily for the court itself. Transparency International has conducted a number of surveys that show that there is a prevailing notion about judicial corruption. Judiciaries across the world have made efforts to address this problem. In Kenya, the reforms led by Chief Justice Willy Mutunga, between 2011 and 2013, are an illustrative example. During this period, institutions such as judicial ombudspersons, court users' committees, and performance management committees were established.

By 2013, public trust in Kenya in the judiciary had risen to 61%, compared to 27% in 2009. The reforms continued even thereafter. This happened only by acknowledging the issues and trying to address them, rather than suppressing critical voices.

In India, the courts including the top court have acknowledged the menace of delay and corruption. Judges have repeatedly warned about the 'bad apples' within the system. The very existence of the in-house Procedure indicates the possibility that a minuscule number of judges may breach their oath.

In *K. Veeraswami vs Union Of India And Others* (1991), the Court categorically held that judges of the High Courts and the Supreme Court fall within the definition of "public servant" for the purposes of prosecution under the Prevention of Corruption Act, while also cautioning against the potential for misuse of this provision by the executive. The Court also said: "We consider that the society's demand for honesty in a judge is exacting and absolute. The standards of judicial behaviour, both on and off the Bench, are normally extremely high. For a judge to deviate from such standards of honesty and impartiality is to betray the trust reposed on him. No excuse or no legal relativity can condone such betrayal. From the standpoint of justice, the size of the bribe or scope of corruption cannot be the scale for measuring a judge's dishonour. A single dishonest judge not only dishonours himself and disgraces his office but jeopardises the integrity of the entire judicial system."

The need for introspection

Therefore, the need to eradicate corruption and delay is also in the best interest of the judiciary. In the interim order directing the book ban, the Court also pointed out that the "book also chooses not to delve into any of the transformative initiatives and measures pioneered by this Court towards overhauling legal aid mechanisms and streamlining the ease of access to justice". Not addressing all counterarguments might render an opinion potentially incomplete. Yet, that is no reason for banning the view expressed. If the exercise of free speech is required to follow a particular form, the right itself becomes illusory. During judicial deliberations, nobody pointed out that the judiciary, like other organs of the state, must be open to dissent and reform.

The first step in fighting systemic problems such as corruption – whether in the executive or the judiciary – is acknowledging it. After all, it is imperative to curb all kinds of corruption and that civil society is educated about the institutional challenges. A court that continuously reforms itself is the bedrock of any democracy.

1. Central issue of the article — लेख का मुख्य मुद्दा

- The article argues that banning an NCERT chapter on judicial transparency raises serious concerns about free speech, accountability and democratic openness — लेख का तर्क है कि न्यायिक पारदर्शिता पर आधारित NCERT अध्याय पर प्रतिबंध लगाना अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता, जवाबदेही और लोकतांत्रिक खुलेपन पर गंभीर प्रश्न खड़े करता है।
- It says that criticism of delay, corruption and opacity in the judiciary should not automatically be treated as an attack on the dignity of courts — इसमें कहा गया है कि न्यायपालिका में देरी, भ्रष्टाचार और अपारदर्शिता की आलोचना को स्वतः अदालत की गरिमा पर हमला नहीं माना जाना चाहिए।
- The larger concern is whether institutions become stronger through suppression of criticism or through reform and introspection — बड़ा प्रश्न यह है कि संस्थाएँ आलोचना दबाने से मजबूत होती हैं या आत्ममंथन और सुधार से।

2. Background of the controversy — विवाद की पृष्ठभूमि

- The article refers to the Supreme Court's interim direction against a Class 8 NCERT social science textbook chapter that discussed corruption and delays in the judiciary — लेख में उस अंतरिम निर्देश का उल्लेख है जिसमें सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने कक्षा 8 की NCERT सामाजिक विज्ञान पुस्तक के उस अध्याय पर आपत्ति जताई जिसमें न्यायपालिका में भ्रष्टाचार और देरी का उल्लेख था।
- The Court reportedly found the treatment selective and broad enough to undermine institutional authority — अदालत ने कथित रूप से इसे चयनात्मक और इतना व्यापक माना कि इससे संस्थागत अधिकार कमजोर हो सकता है।
- The article criticises not only the ban but also the direction that the persons who prepared those passages should be kept away from future projects — लेख केवल प्रतिबंध की ही नहीं, बल्कि उन अंशों को तैयार करने वाले व्यक्तियों को भविष्य की परियोजनाओं से अलग रखने जैसी दिशा-निर्देश की भी आलोचना करता है।

3. Main argument of the author — लेखक का प्रमुख तर्क

- The author argues that a book ban is one of the harshest forms of censorship — लेखक का तर्क है कि पुस्तक पर प्रतिबंध सेंसरशिप का सबसे कठोर रूप है।
 - In a democracy, discussing judicial delay, corruption and accountability should be part of civic education, not something to be hidden — लोकतंत्र में न्यायिक देरी, भ्रष्टाचार और जवाबदेही पर चर्चा नागरिक शिक्षा का हिस्सा होनी चाहिए, न कि छिपाई जाने वाली बात।
 - Citizens and students should understand institutions realistically, including their strengths and weaknesses — नागरिकों और विद्यार्थियों को संस्थाओं को उनकी शक्तियों और कमजोरियों सहित यथार्थ रूप में समझना चाहिए।
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Constitutional and legal angle — संवैधानिक और विधिक पक्ष

4. Freedom of speech issue — अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता का प्रश्न

- The article connects the ban with **Article 19(1)(a)**, which protects freedom of speech and expression — लेख इस प्रतिबंध को **अनुच्छेद 19(1)(a)** से जोड़ता है, जो वाक् और अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता की रक्षा करता है।
- It argues that restrictions on this freedom can be imposed only on grounds specifically allowed under **Article 19(2)** — इसमें कहा गया है कि इस स्वतंत्रता पर प्रतिबंध केवल **अनुच्छेद 19(2)** में दिए गए विशेष आधारों पर ही लगाया जा सकता है।
- According to the article, mere criticism of institutional flaws does not automatically fit within those narrow exceptions — लेख के अनुसार संस्थागत कमियों की मात्र आलोचना स्वतः उन सीमित अपवादों में नहीं आती।

5. Contempt of court angle — अवमानना का पक्ष

- The article notes that for something to amount to contempt, there should be a real tendency to scandalise the court or obstruct the administration of justice — लेख कहता है कि किसी बात को अवमानना मानने के लिए अदालत को बदनाम करने या न्याय प्रशासन में बाधा उत्पन्न करने की वास्तविक प्रवृत्ति होनी चाहिए।
- It suggests that a general educational discussion on corruption or case backlog should not be casually equated with contempt — इसमें संकेत है कि भ्रष्टाचार या लंबित मामलों पर सामान्य शैक्षिक चर्चा को सहज रूप से अवमानना नहीं कहा जाना चाहिए।
- The author sees the issue as one of overreaction rather than genuine judicial protection — लेखक इसे न्यायिक संरक्षण की वास्तविक आवश्यकता से अधिक अतिप्रतिक्रिया का मामला मानता है।

6. Judicial review and institutional balance — न्यायिक पुनरावलोकन और संस्थागत संतुलन

- The article points out an important irony: courts often review laws passed by Parliament in the name of constitutional rights, but when criticism is directed at courts, the space for scrutiny narrows — लेख एक महत्वपूर्ण विडंबना बताता है: अदालतें अक्सर संसद द्वारा बनाए गए कानूनों की संवैधानिक कसौटी पर समीक्षा करती हैं, लेकिन जब आलोचना अदालतों की ओर जाती है, तब समीक्षा की गुंजाइश संकुचित हो जाती है।
- This raises a deeper constitutional question about accountability of all institutions, including the judiciary — इससे एक गहरा संवैधानिक प्रश्न उठता है कि न्यायपालिका सहित सभी संस्थाओं की जवाबदेही कैसे सुनिश्चित हो।

Consider the following statements — निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression — संविधान का अनुच्छेद 19(1)(a) वाक् और अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता की गारंटी देता है।
2. Contempt of court is one of the grounds on which reasonable restrictions may be imposed under Article 19(2) — न्यायालय की अवमानना उन आधारों में से एक है जिन पर अनुच्छेद 19(2) के तहत युक्तिसंगत प्रतिबंध लगाया जा सकता है।
3. Judicial accountability and judicial independence are always mutually exclusive and cannot coexist in a democracy — न्यायिक जवाबदेही और न्यायिक स्वतंत्रता हमेशा एक-दूसरे के विपरीत होती हैं और लोकतंत्र में साथ नहीं चल सकतीं।

Which of the statements given above are correct? — उपर्युक्त में से कौन-से कथन सही हैं?

- A. 1 and 2 only — केवल 1 और 2
- B. 2 and 3 only — केवल 2 और 3
- C. 1 and 3 only — केवल 1 और 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3 — 1, 2 और 3

Cabinet okays ₹33,660-cr. BHAVYA plan for 100 industrial parks by '32

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA), with an allocation of ₹33,660 crore for the development of 100 'plug-and-play' industrial parks across the country.

The aim was to create 100 "future ready" industrial parks integrated with the PM GatiShakti to make use of the latter's multi-modal connectivity and last-mile access.

"These parks will set new benchmarks in industrial infrastructure, ensuring reliability, reducing in-



Manufacturing boost: KINFRA integrated industrial park in Kerala. K. K. MUSTAFAH. (FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY)

efficiencies and enhancing productivity across sectors," the government said.

As per Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade Secretary Amardeep Singh Bhatia,

the scheme's duration would be for six years starting 2026-27. The first phase would see 50 parks being set up.

The minimum land need for the parks would

be 100 acre in most cases, and 25 acre for industrial parks in hilly or North Eastern States. The maximum size is 1,000 acre.

States, pvt. sector

While the Union government will provide up to ₹1 crore per acre, the scheme is meant to involve State governments as well as the private sector.

"At the heart of BHAVYA lies a strong push for deregulation and ease of doing business, with streamlined approvals, effective single-window systems, and investor-friendly reforms led by States," the government said.

1. Main decision — मुख्य निर्णय

- The Union Cabinet has approved the **Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA)** with an outlay of **₹33,660 crore** — केंद्रीय मंत्रिमंडल ने **भारत औद्योगिक विकास योजना (BHAVYA)** को **₹33,660 करोड़** के प्रावधान के साथ मंजूरी दी है।
- The plan aims to develop **100 plug-and-play industrial parks** across the country by **2032** — इस योजना का उद्देश्य **2032 तक देशभर में 100 plug-and-play industrial parks** विकसित करना है।
- The scheme is meant to create **future-ready industrial infrastructure** — यह योजना **भविष्य-उन्मुख औद्योगिक अवसंरचना** तैयार करने के लिए बनाई गई है।

2. Purpose of the scheme — योजना का उद्देश्य

- The article says the parks will be integrated with **PM GatiShakti** to improve multimodal connectivity and last-mile access — लेख के अनुसार इन पार्कों को **PM GatiShakti** से जोड़ा जाएगा ताकि मल्टीमॉडल कनेक्टिविटी और last-mile access बेहतर हो सके।
- The broader aim is to improve **industrial efficiency, productivity and infrastructure quality** — व्यापक उद्देश्य **औद्योगिक दक्षता, उत्पादकता और अवसंरचना की गुणवत्ता** को बढ़ाना है।
- These parks are expected to set **new benchmarks in industrial infrastructure** — इन औद्योगिक पार्कों से **औद्योगिक अवसंरचना के नए मानक** स्थापित होने की अपेक्षा है।

3. Time period and implementation — समयावधि और क्रियान्वयन

- The scheme will run for **six years starting from 2026-27** — यह योजना 2026-27 से शुरू होकर छह वर्षों तक चलेगी।
- In the **first phase, 50 parks** are planned to be set up — पहले चरण में 50 पार्क स्थापित किए जाने का प्रस्ताव है।
- The full target is to complete **100 parks by 2032** — पूरा लक्ष्य 2032 तक 100 पार्क तैयार करने का है।

4. Land requirement — भूमि आवश्यकता

- The **minimum land requirement** for most industrial parks will be **100 acres** — अधिकांश औद्योगिक पार्कों के लिए न्यूनतम भूमि आवश्यकता 100 एकड़ होगी।
- For hilly and North-Eastern States, the minimum size will be **25 acres** — पहाड़ी और उत्तर-पूर्वी राज्यों के लिए न्यूनतम आकार 25 एकड़ रखा गया है।
- The **maximum size** of a park can go up to **1,000 acres** — किसी पार्क का अधिकतम आकार 1,000 एकड़ तक हो सकता है।

5. Funding pattern and participation — वित्तपोषण और भागीदारी

- The Union government will provide support of up to **₹1 crore per acre** — केंद्र सरकार ₹1 करोड़ प्रति एकड़ तक सहायता देगी।
- The scheme is designed to involve **State governments as well as the private sector** — यह योजना राज्य सरकारों और निजी क्षेत्र दोनों की भागीदारी के लिए बनाई गई है।
- This indicates a **shared development model** rather than a purely centralised one — इससे स्पष्ट है कि यह पूरी तरह केंद्रीकृत नहीं बल्कि साझा विकास मॉडल पर आधारित योजना है।

7. What is a plug-and-play industrial park — plug-and-play industrial park क्या होता है

- A plug-and-play industrial park is an industrial area where basic infrastructure such as roads, power, water, drainage and often ready-built factory space is already available — plug-and-play industrial park ऐसा औद्योगिक क्षेत्र होता है जहाँ सड़क, बिजली, पानी, ड्रेनेज और कई बार तैयार factory space जैसी मूलभूत सुविधाएँ पहले से उपलब्ध होती हैं।
- This reduces the time taken by industries to begin production — इससे उद्योगों को उत्पादन शुरू करने में लगने वाला समय कम हो जाता है।
- Such parks help attract investment because initial setup hurdles are reduced — ऐसे पार्क निवेश आकर्षित करने में सहायक होते हैं क्योंकि शुरुआती स्थापना संबंधी कठिनाइयाँ कम हो जाती हैं।

8. Why industrial parks matter — औद्योगिक पार्क क्यों महत्वपूर्ण हैं

- Industrial parks support **manufacturing growth, job creation and regional development** — औद्योगिक पार्क निर्माण क्षेत्र की वृद्धि, रोजगार सृजन और क्षेत्रीय विकास को बढ़ावा देते हैं।
- They help cluster industries together, which improves logistics and lowers costs — ये उद्योगों को एक स्थान पर समूहित करते हैं, जिससे लॉजिस्टिक्स बेहतर होता है और लागत घटती है।
- They also encourage supply-chain linkages and ancillary industries — ये supply-chain linkages और सहायक उद्योगों को भी प्रोत्साहित करते हैं।

9. Link with Indian economy — भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था से संबंध

- Industrial infrastructure is an important part of India's effort to boost **manufacturing competitiveness** — औद्योगिक अवसंरचना भारत के **manufacturing competitiveness** को बढ़ाने के प्रयास का महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा है।
- Better industrial parks can improve **exports, employment and investment climate** — बेहतर औद्योगिक पार्क निर्यात, रोजगार और निवेश वातावरण को सुधार सकते हैं।
- Integration with logistics systems such as PM GatiShakti can reduce transport delays and transaction costs — PM GatiShakti जैसे लॉजिस्टिक ढाँचों से जुड़ाव परिवहन विलंब और लेनदेन लागत को कम कर सकता है।

- **BHAVYA stands for Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana — BHAVYA का पूर्ण रूप भारत औद्योगिक विकास योजना है।**
 - **Total outlay is ₹33,660 crore — कुल प्रावधान ₹33,660 करोड़ है।**
 - **Target is 100 industrial parks by 2032 — लक्ष्य 2032 तक 100 औद्योगिक पार्क है।**
 - **Scheme duration is six years from 2026-27 — योजना की अवधि 2026-27 से छह वर्ष है।**
 - **First phase will see 50 parks — पहले चरण में 50 पार्क बनाए जाएंगे।**
 - **Minimum land is 100 acres, but 25 acres for hilly and North-Eastern States — न्यूनतम भूमि 100 एकड़ है, जबकि पहाड़ी और उत्तर-पूर्वी राज्यों के लिए 25 एकड़ है।**
 - **Maximum size is 1,000 acres — अधिकतम आकार 1,000 एकड़ है।**
 - **Central support is up to ₹1 crore per acre — केंद्रीय सहायता ₹1 करोड़ प्रति एकड़ तक है।**
-

Consider the following statements — निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. BHAVYA aims to develop 100 plug-and-play industrial parks by 2032 — BHAVYA का लक्ष्य 2032 तक 100 plug-and-play industrial parks विकसित करना है।
2. The minimum land requirement for all parks under the scheme is 100 acres without any exception — योजना के अंतर्गत सभी पार्कों के लिए न्यूनतम भूमि 100 एकड़ है और कोई अपवाद नहीं है।
3. The scheme seeks to involve both State governments and the private sector — यह योजना राज्य सरकारों और निजी क्षेत्र दोनों की भागीदारी चाहती है।

Which of the statements given above are correct? — उपर्युक्त में से कौन-से कथन सही हैं?

- A. 1 and 3 only — केवल 1 और 3
- B. 1 and 2 only — केवल 1 और 2
- C. 2 and 3 only — केवल 2 और 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3 — 1, 2 और 3



India Post – “24 Speed Post” Service



Feature

Details (English)

शुभरुतु (शुभरुतु)

Delivery Verification

OTP-based delivery authentication

OTP षु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु

Tracking

End-to-end tracking with real-time alerts

शुभरुतु-शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु

Transparency

Improves reliability and visibility

शुभरुतुशुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु

Business Support

“Book Now Pay Later (BNPL)” facility

“शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु

Billing

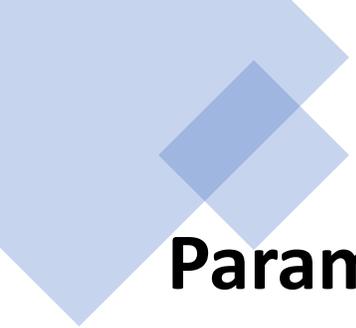
Centralised billing system

शुभरुतुशुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु

API Integration

Supports digital logistics integration

शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु शुभरुतु

**Parameter****Speed Post****24 Speed Post**

Delivery Time

2–3 days (approx.)

Guaranteed next-day
(D+1)

Service Level

Standard

Premium

Guarantee

No strict guarantee

Guaranteed delivery

Refund

Limited conditions

Full refund on delay

Target Users

General public

Businesses & urgent
users

William Dalrymple –
Mark Lynton History
Prize 2026

Topic

Award Winner

Awarded Book

Award Type

Prize Money

Administered By

Named After

Frequency

Core Criteria

Details (English)

William Dalrymple won the **Mark Lynton History Prize 2026**

The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World

Prestigious international award for **historical writing**

Around **\$10,000 cash prize**

Nieman Foundation + Columbia University (J. Anthony Lukas Prize Project)

Mark Lynton (noted publisher & supporter of journalism)

Annual award

Combines **research depth + literary excellence**

श्रमत्रघर् (श्रमत्रह)

श्रमत्रगरव म्मत्रघर् च ष्ट रवर्द्ध श्रमत्र ष्ट श्रमत्र ब्रस्न् 2026 न्हल्व

द गोल्डन रोड: हाउ एंशिएंट इंडिया ट्रांसफॉर्मड द वर्ल्ड

अल्पवर्द्ध चर्द्ध ष्ट इड श्रमत्र श्रमत्र न्वर्द्ध अत्रत्र श्रमत्र श्रमत्र श्रमत्र श्रमत्र

चणकण 10,000 म्मत्रघर् ष्ट ष्ट ह्मत्रघर्

एहरवर्द्ध ष्ट श्रमत्र ष्ट + इड श्रमत्र श्रमत्र श्रमत्र (नः इड श्रमत्र श्रमत्र श्रमत्र) श्रमत्र श्रमत्र

रवर्द्ध श्रमत्र (श्रमत्र बड्वर्द्ध ष्ट श्रमत्र हर्द्ध श्रमत्र श्रमत्र) इड श्रमत्र श्रमत्र

अत्रत्र ह्मत्रघर्

एणर् ट्मत्र + श्रमत्र श्रमत्र श्रमत्र इव श्रमत्र

Area	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
Indian Ocean Trade	Ancient India was central to Indian Ocean trade network	प्राचीन भारत हिंद महासागर व्यापार नेटवर्क का केंद्र था
Soft Power	India spread influence through culture, not conquest	भारत ने सांस्कृतिक प्रभाव से विस्तार किया, विजय से नहीं
Religion Spread	Buddhism, Hindu ideas spread to China, Japan, Southeast Asia	बौद्ध और हिंदू विचार चीन, जापान, दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया तक पहुँचे
Knowledge Transfer	Universities like Nalanda & Takshashila attracted global scholars	नालंदा और तक्षशिला में विश्वभर से विद्यार्थी आते थे
Maritime Routes	Monsoon winds enabled trade routes	मानसून हवाओं ने समुद्री व्यापार को संभव बनाया
Roman Trade	India exported spices, textiles; imported gold	भारत मसाले, वस्त्र निर्यात करता था; सोना आयात करता था
Cultural Syncretism	Indian culture merged with local cultures abroad	भारतीय संस्कृति अन्य संस्कृतियों के साथ मिश्रित हुई
Terminology	"Golden Road" = cultural & intellectual connectivity, not just trade	"गोल्डन रोड" केवल व्यापार नहीं, बल्कि सांस्कृतिक और बौद्धिक संपर्क का प्रतीक है

Aspect

Details (English)

शुभ्रघरु (शुभ्ररुह)

Profession

Historian, author, commentator

सुभ्ररुह इवघ, चरु इ, शुरुह इवघ

Known For

Writing on **Indian history, Mughals, colonial period**

करुघरुह सुभ्ररुह, ररुघ च इवघ, इ सुभ्ररुह इ इवघ इघ चरु इ

Famous Books

White Mughals, The Last Mughal, The Anarchy, Return of a King

करुघ ररुघ, इ चरु ररुघ, इ इवघ, सुभ्ररुह इ १ शुभ्ररुह

Role

Co-founder of **Jaipur Literature Festival**

न गुरु शुभ्ररुह सुभ्ररुह सुभ्ररुह इ इवघ-इवघ इ

Writing Style

Combines **storytelling + deep historical research**

इवघरुह इवघरुह + इवघ इवघ इवघ शुभ्ररुह

Question

Consider the following statements —

1. Mark Lynton History Prize is awarded annually for excellence in historical writing —
2. “The Golden Road” highlights India’s role as a global exporter of culture and ideas —
3. The prize is administered only by the Government of India —

Bhumika Shrestha –
Nepal's First Transgender
Woman MP

Topic	Details (English)	शुभुतुतुतु (शुभुतुतु)
Name	Bhumika Shrestha	कुशुतुतुतु कुशुतुतु
Country	Nepal	कुशुतुतुतु
Achievement	First transgender woman Member of Parliament	कुशुतुतुतु इतु इतुतुतु कुशुतुतुतु रकुशुतुतुतु कुशुतुतुतु
Year	2026	2026
Age	Around 37 years	कुशुतुतुतु 37 कुशुतुतुतु
Background	LGBTQ rights activist	LGBTQ कुशुतुतुतु कुशुतुतुतु कुशुतुतुतु
Party/Entry	Elected under proportional representation system	कुशुतुतुतु कुशुतुतुतु कुशुतुतुतु कुशुतुतुतु कुशुतुतुतु

Aspect

Political Significance

Details (English)

First-time representation of transgender community in Nepal's Parliament

शुभसंघर्ष (शुभसंघर्ष)

शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष
शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष
शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष

Regional Impact

Major step for **South Asia's inclusivity and diversity**

शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष
शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष
शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष

Social Impact

Gives voice to marginalized LGBTQ community

LGBTQ शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष
शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष
शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष

Democratic Value

Strengthens participatory democracy

शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष
शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष
शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष

Symbolism

Transition from legal recognition to political participation

शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष
शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष
शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष शुभसंघर्ष

3. Who is Bhumika Shrestha?

Aspect	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
Profession	LGBTQ rights activist	LGBTQ अधिकार कार्यकर्ता
Work Area	Advocacy for dignity, equality and legal rights	सम्मान, समानता और कानूनी अधिकारों के लिए कार्य
Key Issues Raised	Discrimination, social acceptance, legal rights	भेदभाव, सामाजिक स्वीकृति, कानूनी अधिकार
Reputation	Known for consistent activism in Nepal	नेपाल में सक्रिय सामाजिक कार्यकर्ता के रूप में प्रसिद्ध

4. Political Context in Nepal

Aspect	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
Background	Entry followed political changes after protests	राजनीतिक बदलाव और विरोध प्रदर्शनों के बाद प्रवेश
2025 Context	Anti-corruption protests led to political shift	2025 में भ्रष्टाचार विरोधी आंदोलनों से सत्ता परिवर्तन
Governance Shift	Rise of reform-oriented leadership	सुधारवादी नेतृत्व का उदय
Result	Inclusion of underrepresented communities	वंचित वर्गों का प्रतिनिधित्व बढ़ा

Nepal – LGBTQ Legal Progress (Very Important for Exam)

Aspect	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
Third Gender Recognition	Recognised in citizenship documents (2013)	2013 में नागरिकता में तीसरे लिंग की मान्यता
Anti-Discrimination	Sexual orientation discrimination banned (2007)	2007 में यौन अभिविन्यास के आधार पर भेदभाव प्रतिबंधित
Marriage Rights	Supreme Court allowed registration of same-sex marriages (2023, progressive step)	2023 में समलैंगिक विवाह पंजीकरण की अनुमति (प्रगतिशील कदम)
Key Organisation	Blue Diamond Society	ब्लू डायमंड सोसाइटी (LGBTQ संगठन)
Regional Status	Nepal is among most progressive in South Asia on LGBTQ rights	दक्षिण एशिया में LGBTQ अधिकारों के मामले में नेपाल अग्रणी देशों में

Country

Key Point (English)

संक्षेप (संक्षेप)

Nepal

Early recognition of third gender

लहृदघृश्रयण इह ब्रधश्रयण्ड
रक्रेल्व

India

Recognised transgender rights (NALSA judgment 2014)

NALSA श्रयण 2014 दृ
ब्रध लघृ शश्र इवघ रक्रेल्व

Pakistan

Legal recognition but limited representation

इवश्रह रक्रेल्व, हघ दृश्रयण
घृ पृश्रयण्ड ब्रधश्रयण्ड

Bangladesh

Third gender recognised but social challenges remain

लहृदघृश्रयण इह रक्रेल्व, हघ
दृश्रयण्ड इ दृश्रयण्ड

Question

Consider the following statements —

1. Nepal recognised third gender identity in official documents before India —
2. Bhumika Shrestha is Nepal's first transgender Member of Parliament —
3. Nepal does not allow any form of legal recognition for same-sex marriage —

HDFC Bank Chairman Atanu Chakraborty Resigns

2. Reason Behind Resignation

Aspect	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
Core Reason	Ethical differences with bank practices	बैंक की कार्यप्रणाली से नैतिक असहमति
Statement	Practices not aligned with personal values	व्यक्तिगत मूल्यों से मेल नहीं खाती प्रथाएँ
Transparency	No other material reasons cited	अन्य कोई कारण नहीं बताया गया
Governance Impact	Raises concerns about corporate governance	कॉर्पोरेट गवर्नेंस पर सवाल

3. Interim Appointment

Aspect	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
Authority	Approved by RBI	आरबीआई द्वारा अनुमोदित
Purpose	Ensure continuity in leadership	नेतृत्व की निरंतरता सुनिश्चित करना
Duration	Approx. 3 months	लगभग 3 महीने
Importance	Stability during transition	संक्रमण काल में स्थिरता

4. Tenure & Contributions

Aspect	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
Joined	2021	2021
Key Role	Oversaw major merger phase	बड़े विलय (merger) के दौरान भूमिका
Major Event	HDFC Bank + HDFC Ltd merger (~\$40 billion)	एचडीएफसी बैंक और एचडीएफसी लिमिटेड का विलय (~40 अरब डॉलर)
Impact	Created one of largest financial institutions	भारत की सबसे बड़ी वित्तीय संस्थाओं में से एक बना

5. HDFC Bank – Key Exam Facts

Aspect	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
Type	Private Sector Bank	निजी क्षेत्र का बैंक
Status	One of India's largest banks	भारत के सबसे बड़े बैंकों में से एक
Regulator	Reserve Bank of India (RBI)	भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक (RBI)
Merger	HDFC Ltd merged with HDFC Bank (2023)	2023 में एचडीएफसी लिमिटेड का विलय
Importance	Systemically important bank (Too big to fail concept)	प्रणालीगत रूप से महत्वपूर्ण बैंक

Word of the day

Debilitate:

make weak

Synonyms: drain, enfeeble

Usage: *Constant stress can debilitate your immune system.*

Pronunciation:

<https://newsth.live/zb24fs>

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /dɪˈbɪlɪteɪt/

Word of the day

Stupefy:

to surprise or shock somebody

Synonyms: stun, amaze, startle

Usage: *The heat seemed to stupefy everyone*

Pronunciation:

newsth.live/stupefypro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /stjuːpɪfaɪ/



Thank you 😊