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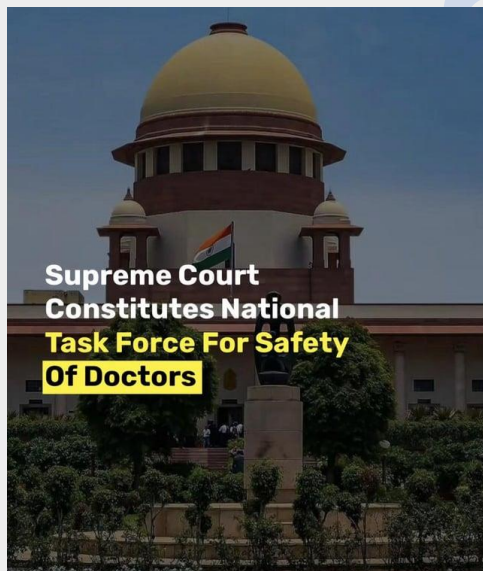
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### **1. Supreme Court Establishes Task Force for Doctors' Safety**

#### **Formation of National Task Force (NTF)**

The Supreme Court recently formed a National Task Force (NTF) to develop safety measures for medical professionals. The NTF will recommend improvements in hospital security, including:

- Security on hospital premises
- Infrastructure upgrades like separate restrooms
- Technological controls to limit access to critical areas
- Installation of CCTV cameras
- Provision of night transport
- Availability of counseling services and crisis workshops
- Quarterly safety audits
- Increased police presence in hospitals



**Supreme Court  
Constitutes National  
Task Force For Safety  
Of Doctors**

#### **Reason for Sua Motu Action**

A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud explained that the court acted on its own initiative following the rape and murder of a junior doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. The incident highlighted systemic failures in ensuring the safety of medical professionals. The court emphasized that such tragedies should not be necessary to prompt action on safety laws.

#### **Directive to the Central Government**

The Central Government has been given one month to gather data from all States and Union Territories on security and infrastructure facilities at government-run hospitals. This includes compliance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013.

#### **Members of the National Task Force**

The NTF includes prominent medical professionals and officials:

- Surgeon Vice-Admiral Arti Sarin, Director General Medical Services (Navy)
- D. Nageshwar Reddy, Chairperson and Managing Director, Asian Institute of Gastroenterology and AIG Hospitals, Hyderabad
- M. Srinivas, Director, AIIMS Delhi

- Pratima Murthy, Director, NIMHANS Bengaluru
- Goverdhen Dutt Puri, Executive Director, AIIMS Jodhpur
- Saumitra Rawat, Chairperson, Institute of Surgical Gastroenterology, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Delhi
- Anita Saxena, Vice-Chancellor, Pandit B.D. Sharma Medical University, Rohtak
- Pallavi Saple, Dean, Grant Medical College, Mumbai, and Sir J.J. Group of Hospitals, Mumbai
- Padma Srivastav, Chairperson of Neurology, Paras Health

Ex-officio members include the Cabinet Secretary, the Union Home and Family Welfare Secretaries, the Chairperson of the National Medical Commission, and the President of the National Board of Examinations.

### **Chief Justice's Remarks on Safety Protocols**

Chief Justice Chandrachud expressed concern over the lack of safety for doctors, particularly young women doctors who often work 36-hour shifts. He stressed the need for a national protocol to ensure safe working conditions for medical personnel, emphasizing that such protocols must be implemented, not just written.

### **Concerns About Gender Violence in the Medical Profession**

The Chief Justice highlighted the vulnerability of women medical professionals to sexual assaults, noting that gender violence in the medical profession is a grave issue.

### **Appeal to Protesting Medical Staff**

The Chief Justice urged protesting doctors and medical staff to return to work, assuring them that their concerns would be a top priority for the Supreme Court. The court also warned the West Bengal government against using force on protestors.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Hindu

## **2. Why Modi's visit to Ukraine marks three new roads: India in Europe, diplomatic space, and Delhi-Kyiv revival**

### **Introduction**

It took the tragic and a globally disruptive war to bring Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Kyiv, the first such visit since Ukraine re-established itself as an independent nation amid the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

But by showing up in Ukraine and lending a shoulder to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who is leading a badly battered nation to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty, Modi has initiated three important processes: insert India into Europe's quest for peace; expand Delhi's room for manoeuvre in the global geopolitical churn triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine; and reclaim Delhi's lost bonds with Kyiv in the post-Soviet era.

### **1. India in Europe**

First, on the question of ending the war in Ukraine, Modi had no spectacular peace plan to unveil. That Modi took a long train ride from Warsaw to Ukraine to engage Zelenskyy in a long and intense conversation on war and peace was an important moment in itself.

What Kyiv needed was not yet another peace plan but Modi's understanding of Ukraine's concerns about survival as a nation that did not get sufficient resonance in India and the so-called Global South.

Zelenskyy hopes that Modi's willingness to hear Ukraine's case and contribute to the peace efforts will help turn the political tide in the Global South that has stood apart from the war, despite its massive economic consequences.



## 2. Diplomatic space

Second, as the geopolitical consequences of the war in Ukraine unfold, Modi's visit to Kyiv is a signal that Delhi will no longer be a passive by-stander in a conflict that is reshaping the world. For five centuries, India was an adjunct to European wars. Modi's visit to Ukraine underlines India's determination to actively shape the major European and global war of the times.

India is not the only Asian power trying to alter the European balance of power. That the Chinese Prime Minister Li Qiang was winding up his visit in Moscow when Modi was travelling from Warsaw to Kyiv is a reminder of China's growing role in shaping the contours of the war in Ukraine. Ukraine is not only about renewed contest between Russia and the West but also about the role of Delhi and Beijing in Europe.

As Modi arrived in Kyiv, Kamala Harris, in a thundering speech accepting the nomination of the Democratic Party to be the next President of the United States, declared her deep commitment to defend Ukraine and strengthen NATO.

The enthusiastic reception to Harris's candidacy and her strong stance on Ukraine will test the widespread assessment that the US is a "weary titan" waiting to retreat from Europe. The Republican idea of pivoting away from Europe is now being challenged by Democrats. The outcome of that debate will have major consequences for India's security policy.

If the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in Washington this week underlines India's expanding strategic ties with the US, Modi's engagement with President Vladimir Putin and Zelenskyy in quick succession underline India's determination to protect its interests amidst the tremors from the reordering of great power relations.

### 3. Delhi-Kyiv revival

Finally, Modi's visit is also about re-establishing the lost bonds between India and Ukraine. Although India had privileged access to Ukraine in the Soviet era, Kyiv did not inherit its share of India's political affections for the USSR.

The extraordinary goodwill for India in Ukraine was reflected in the warm welcome extended to Modi in Kyiv. The commitment by Modi and Zelensky to elevate their relationship into a "strategic partnership", reboot their economic and defence ties, and revitalise their cultural ties marks the end of the prolonged neglect of India's ties with Ukraine.

Above all, Modi's visit should help bring greater nuance and sophistication to India's debate on the war in Ukraine that has been subject too long to political prejudice and ignorance about Central European history.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: Indian Express

### 3. Polaris Dawn: Another small step to Mars?

#### Background



If it succeeds, Polaris Dawn will be the first non-government mission to perform a spacewalk. But not only that — it'll do that about 700 kilometers (435 miles) above Earth. The highest ever.

To compare: the International Space Station (ISS) orbits Earth at about 400 kilometers, where the radiation is less intense.

It will also orbit Earth through regions of a highly-charged belt of radiation. There are two of these "Van Allen Belts", an inner and an outer one.

Astronauts tend to avoid the hazardous Van Allen Belts, but they will have to travel through them if humans want to fly to Mars and survive. This privately-funded mission could be a first step toward that goal.

The four astronauts on the Polaris Dawn mission will test new spacesuits, designed by Elon Musk's company, SpaceX, to see how well they protect them against the Van Allen Belt radiation.

SpaceX is also providing the spacecraft — a Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon capsule for the crew — to reach an altitude beyond the current record of 1,373 kilometers, set by NASA's Gemini 11 mission in 1966.

### **Who is the Polaris Dawn crew?**

- Jared Isaacman, Mission Commander
- Scott Poteet, Mission Pilot
- Sarah Gillis, Mission Specialist
- Anna Menon, Mission Specialist and Medical Officer
- Polaris Dawn, the first of a three-part program, is Isaacman's idea.

Isaacman is a billionaire entrepreneur, who made his money in digital payments and military defense. He previously financed and flew on SpaceX's Inspiration4 mission, the first civilian mission to orbit Earth.

### **Why are the Van Allen Belts dangerous for humans?**

The Van Allen Belts consist of charged particles locked in place by Earth's magnetosphere, which includes its magnetic field.

Earth's magnetosphere traps high-energy radiation particles and protects our planet from solar storms and other threats to daily life from space.

While the outer belt holds high-energy particles from the sun, the inner belt is formed by cosmic rays that interact with Earth's atmosphere.

They were discovered by American physicist James Van Allen in 1958.

The Van Allen Belts range from about 680 kilometers above Earth's surface to what some estimates suggest is about 40,000 kilometers from the surface of the planet. And there's a gap between the first and second belt.

The inner "proton" zone is centered at about 3,000 kilometers from Earth's surface and the outer "electron" zone is centered about 15-20,000 kilometers from Earth's surface.

The Polaris Dawn spacewalk will expose the crew to higher levels of radiation than on the ISS. They hope to collect data on the effects of that radiation as a key scientific experiment.

In 2025, NASA plans to send astronauts beyond the Van Allen Belts to land on the south pole of the moon, and eventually on to Mars. Any data provided by Polaris Dawn will feed into those future missions.

### **Planned health research on Polaris Dawn**

Polaris intends to use data from the mission to create research Biobanks to study the effects of space travel on human biology.

It will investigate the effects of space travel on eyesight and brain structure — a major health risk in space, known as Spaceflight Associated Neuro-ocular Syndrome (SANS).

The team also hopes to contribute to studies into decompression sickness (DCS), another health risk during spaceflight. DCS occurs when nitrogen gas bubbles (or gas emboli) damage human tissue.

### **First test of laser communications in space**

The crew will test laser communications provided by SpaceX's Starlink satellite network. Starlink is large satellite constellation, eventually consisting of about 12,000 satellites for communication on Earth and in space. It was used early in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Polaris hopes its communications tests will provide "valuable data for future space communications systems necessary for missions to the Moon, Mars and beyond."

### **What's planned for future Polaris missions?**

Isaacman has committed to three missions in collaboration with SpaceX. This first mission is scheduled to last five days.

The second mission will, they say, "expand the boundaries of future human spaceflight missions, in-space communications, and scientific research."

And the third mission will be the first crewed test of SpaceX's reusable Starship spacecraft. As with any space mission, the Polaris Dawn launch on August 26, 2024, may be delayed due to extreme weather conditions or technical issues.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: Indian Express