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1. Arrest warrant issued against Gautam Adani in New York for alleged bribery: What this means, what happens next

Overview

Arrest Warrants Issued For Gautam Adani And nephew



A Reuters report said arrest warrants were issued in the United States for Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar Adani, after a grand jury in New York indicted the business tycoon and seven others on charges of bribery of \$265 million (around Rs 2,029 crore).

Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Criminal Division,

accused Adani and his associates of bribing Indian government officials and conspiring to obtain lucrative solar energy supply contracts "through corruption and fraud at the expense of US investors.

What is an indictment in the US legal system and what does it mean for Adani and his alleged conspirators? What is likely to happen next?

What is an indictment?

According to Black's Law Dictionary, "An indictment is a formal written accusation" issued against a party charged with a crime, following a step-by-step process.

After investigating an alleged offence, the police hand over the evidence to a public prosecutor — a lawyer representing either the state or federal government, depending on whether the accusations relate to state or federal offences. If the prosecutor believes a serious crime or a "felony" has been committed, she may then initiate the selection of a grand jury.

What is a grand jury and who are its members?

A grand jury is a panel, composed of people selected randomly from a "fair cross-section" of citizens living within the jurisdiction of the court that may hear the case. It can include up to 23 people in the State of New York, with a minimum of 16 jurors required to be present to hear evidence.

This step is crucial, as according to the official Grand Juror's Handbook for the State of New York (where Adani and his associates have been charged), "In New York State, a person cannot be brought to trial for a felony unless that person has been indicted by a grand jury."

What does a grand jury do?

Unlike a trial jury that one sees in legal procedural dramas or movies, the purpose of a grand jury is not to determine the innocence or guilt of an accused person. While a trial jury must determine if a person is guilty "beyond reasonable doubt", a grand jury needs to meet a lower standard. As an additional step to the criminal trial process, the grand jury must decide if the evidence on record is enough to necessitate holding a trial at all.

If the grand jury deems the evidence sufficient, it issues an "indictment" with a list of formal charges against the accused. The case will then be taken to trial for a final hearing and decision. Grand jury proceedings are also held in secret, as opposed to trial proceedings open to the public. To deliver an indictment, there need not be unanimous agreement among the jurors, unlike when the case goes to trial. In New York, a minimum of 12 jurors (out of the 16 to 23 who have heard the evidence) must agree on whether to issue an indictment.

What happens now?

In Adani's case, following the indictment, the trial will likely move to the "arraignment" stage. The judge will communicate the charges and decide whether to grant bail to the accused persons, who will, in turn, decide whether to plead guilty or not guilty in response to the charges. If they plead not guilty, the case will proceed to a jury trial.

According to Reuters, prosecutors are reportedly planning to hand the arrest warrants to foreign law enforcement.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Hindu

2. Second India-CARICOM Summit

Introduction

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of Grenada, H.E. Mr. Dickon Mitchell, the current CARICOM Chair, chaired the 2nd India-CARICOM Summit in Georgetown on 20 November 2024. The first India-CARICOM Summit was held in 2019 in New York.

Key Highlights

To further build on India's close development partnership and strong people to people ties with the region, Prime Minister offered assistance to CARICOM countries in seven key areas.

These areas fit well with the CARICOM acronym and amplify the close bonds of friendship between India and the group. They are:

1. C: Capacity Building
2. A: Agriculture and Food Security
3. R: Renewable Energy and Climate Change
4. I: Innovation, Technology and Trade

5. C: Cricket and Culture
6. O: Ocean Economy and Maritime Security
7. M: Medicine and Healthcare

Capacity Building

On capacity building, Prime Minister announced one thousand more ITEC slots for CARICOM countries over the next five years. The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme, ITEC for short, is the leading capacity building platform of the Ministry Of External Affairs, Government of India. Instituted in 1964, ITEC is one of the oldest institutionalized arrangements for international capacity building having trained more than 200,000 officials from 160+ countries in both the civilian and in the defence sector.

Agriculture and Food Security

In the area of food security, a critical challenge for these countries, he shared India's experience with embracing technology in the agriculture domain - drones, digital farming, farm mechanization and soil testing. Given that Sargassum seaweed poses a major challenge for tourism in the Caribbean, Prime Minister noted that India would be happy to help convert the seaweed into fertilizer.

Renewable Energy and Climate Change

Calling for enhancing collaboration between India and the CARICOM in the fields of renewable energy and climate change, Prime Minister urged members to join the global initiatives led by India such as the International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Mission LiFE and Global Biofuel Alliance.

Innovation, Technology and Trade

Speaking about transformative changes brought about by innovation, technology and trade in India, Prime Minister offered India's Digital Public Infrastructure, cloud-based Digi locker and UPI models to countries in CARICOM to augment public service delivery.

Cricket and Culture

CARICOM and India share close cultural and cricketing ties. Prime Minister announced training in India for 11 young women cricketers from each of the CARICOM countries. He also proposed organizing "Days of Indian Culture" in member countries next year to strengthen people-to-people ties.

Ocean Economy and Maritime Security

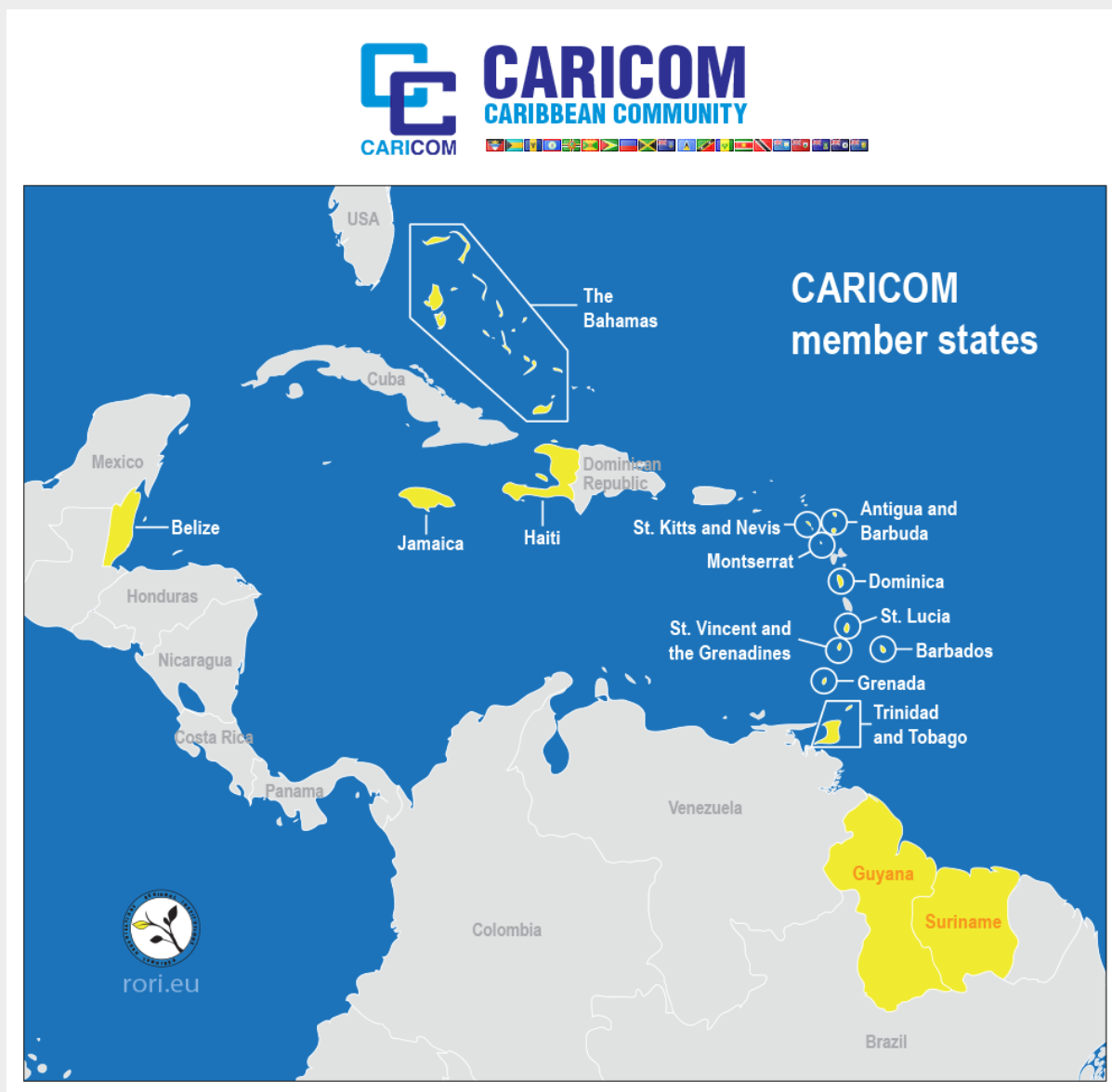
To boost ocean economy and maritime security, Prime Minister noted that India was ready to work with CARICOM members on maritime domain mapping and hydrography in the Caribbean Sea.

Medicine and Healthcare

Prime Minister highlighted India's success with quality and affordable healthcare. He offered India's model of making available generic medicine through the Jan Aushadhi Kendras [generic medicine shops]. He also announced sending Yoga experts for promoting the e health and wellbeing of the people of CARICOM.

Response of CARICOM Leaders

The CARICOM leaders welcomed Prime Minister's Seven Point Plan for strengthening partnership between India and CARICOM. They appreciated India's leadership of the Global South and its strong support for climate justice for the Small Island Developing States. They called for reform of global institutions and in this regard looked forward to working closely with India.



CARICOM

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM or CC) is an intergovernmental organisation that is a political and economic union of 15 member states (14 nation-states and one dependency) and five associated members throughout the Americas, The Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean. It has the primary objective to promote economic integration and cooperation among its members, ensure that the benefits of integration are equitably shared, and coordinate foreign policy. The organisation was established in 1973, by its four founding members signing the Treaty of Chaguaramas.

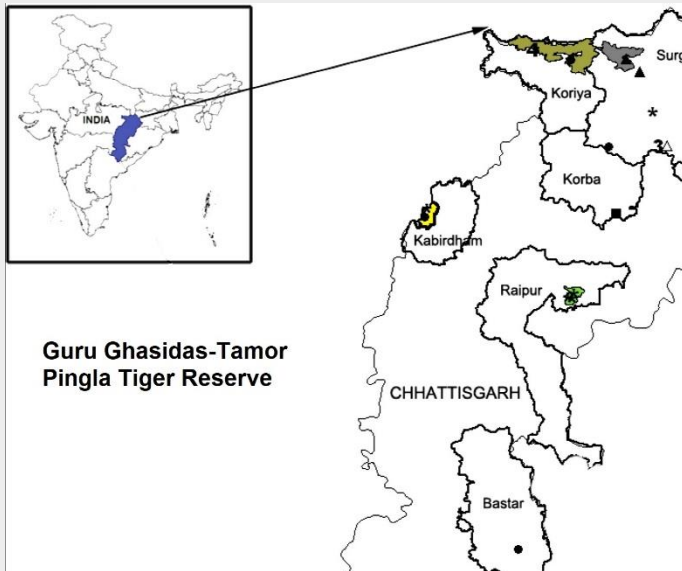
The secretariat headquarters is in Georgetown, Guyana. CARICOM has been granted the official United Nations General Assembly observer status.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: PiB

3. Chhattisgarh's newest tiger reserve

Introduction



Earlier this month, the Chhattisgarh government notified the Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla in the state as India's 56th tiger reserve.

The reserve is expected to help Chhattisgarh improve its tiger population, which has been dwindling in recent years. It also opens an avenue to the state's ambition of reintroducing cheetahs at the reserve — the last cheetah was spotted here in the 1940s.

What do we know about the reserve?

The Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla is the fourth tiger reserve in Chhattisgarh after Achanakmar, Indravati, and Udanti Sitanadi. The total area of the new tiger reserve is 2,829.387 sq km, making it the third largest tiger reserve in India.

It is spread across four districts, Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur (MCB), Korea, Surajpur, and Balrampur in the northern tribal Sarguja region of Chhattisgarh.

The Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla falls between two other important tiger reserves located in Bandhavgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Palamau, Jharkhand. It is adjacent to Sanjay Dubri Tiger Reserve, also in MP.

The reserve comprises a wide range of wildlife species (apart from tigers) such as elephants, sloth bears, vultures, peacocks, wolves, leopards, otters, chitals, jackals, nilgai, bison, hyenas, langurs, cobras etc.

The Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla is also rich in flora — comprising sal, saja, dhavda, kusum etc — different types of vegetation. It consists of hills, plateaus, valleys, and a river system which create a diverse habitat for its rich wildlife.

What is Chhattisgarh's current tiger population?

Currently, there are 30 tigers, including three sub-adults and two cubs, in the state, according to Sudhir Kumar Agrawal, Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW), Chhattisgarh. There are five to six tigers at the Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve as of now.

The state's tiger population fell from 46 in 2014 to 17 in 2022, the last official tiger status report released by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), released in 2023, revealed.

How does Chhattisgarh plan to boost its tiger population?

Agrawal told The Indian Express that to increase the tiger population "we are proposing to bring a few tigresses [to the new tiger reserve] from Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh and Sanjay Dubri to meet the proportion of male tigers."

He also said that several other measures are being implemented. These include creating rapid response teams, building a good rapport with villagers, developing informer-based wildlife protection/prevention, and deploying full-time guards.

How are authorities preparing for tiger conservation?

Authorities are preparing a comprehensive Tiger Conservation Plan (TCP), which will tackle different challenges that tiger conservation at the reserve may face. The plan includes:

- Developing a robust road and wireless connectivity to help patrol the hilly terrain, which forms more than 50% of the reserve.
- Increasing the prey base for tigers. To do so, in the past few years, authorities have been developing grasslands and water bodies. They have also translocated hundreds of cheetal and wild boars to the reserve from other places in the state.
- Strengthening the wildlife corridors with MP which have seen an increase in tiger population recently. Saurabh Singh Thakur, director of Guru Ghasidas National Park, told The Indian Express, "As the population of tigers in MP is increasing, the young and sub-adult tigers will be in search of a new territory and we have already witnessed Tiger migration from MP. So, the forest department's initiatives will be focused upon grassland development, water resource availability, prey base management and mitigating human-wildlife conflict for the two corridors from Sanjay and Bandhavgarh Tiger reserves to enable a natural transition for them."
- Creating awareness among villagers to avoid possible animal-human conflict. The reserve consists of 42 sparsely populated villages and the residents will have the option to relocate voluntarily. They will also be given priority for jobs related to the reserve. Authorities will train residents to run tourism-related businesses such as tour guides, homestays, boating, and handicrafts, among others.

What other preparations are taking place at the reserve?

The government is working on creating an entire eco-tourism circuit and getting a heritage site tag for the reserve. Apart from the jungle safari, infrastructure is being developed for eight ancient cave painting sites, religious places, river walk, vulture siting, origin of Hasdeo river, 360 degrees view of Balam Ghat and waterfalls.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Environment

Source: Indian Express