

## 1. Why Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, and why he wants to renegotiate now

### Introduction

US President Donald Trump said that he has written to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei about renegotiating a nuclear deal. "I've written them a letter, saying I hope you're going to negotiate, because if we have to go in militarily it's going to be a terrible thing for them," Trump said.



### What happened earlier?

In 2015, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Germany, the European Union, and Iran signed the 'Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action' (JCPOA), more commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal. The Obama-era deal provided Iran with sanctions relief in return for Tehran severely limiting the scope of its nuclear program — Iran agreed to not enrich its uranium beyond 3.67%, a level suitable for peaceful nuclear power applications but not for weapons production — and signing a roadmap agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the deal in 2018, during his first term as president.

### Why did Trump withdraw from the deal in 2018?

Having deemed the JCPOA one of "the worst and most one-sided transactions" for the US. But the withdrawal was met with strong international backlash. The IAEA said that Iran was complying with JCPOA-linked restrictions and UNSC Resolution 2231.

This led to Iran, by 2019, beginning a significant roll-back of its commitments, even though it formally remained in the deal.

### **How has the deal fared since then?**

The technical expiry of the JCPOA is in October 2025. But the European failure to lobby a US re-entry, new American sanctions, and Iran's incremental rollback of its commitments in response has ensured the deal's progressive weakening.

In recent times, the IAEA has repeatedly warned of Iran's continued production of near-weapons-grade uranium.

### **Why would Iran re-enter?**

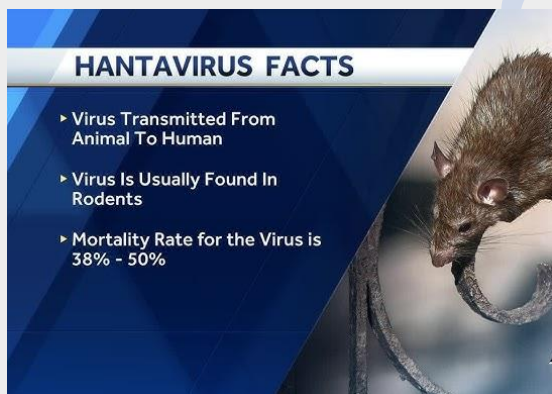
By late 2024, the Iranian economy was in dire straits. Newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian said that the country faced "very dire imbalances in gas, electricity, energy, water, money and environment."

This is likely the principal trigger for Iran's openness to engage with the US. All this said, there remains a strong trust deficit between Washington and Tehran.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: Indian Express

## **2. Hantavirus in News**



### **Introduction**

Oscar-winning actor Gene Hackman, his pianist wife, Betsy Arakawa and their dog were found dead in their apartment in the US on February 26. As the investigation unfolded, it became clear that all three had been dead for days, with their deaths ruled "suspicious enough in nature" to warrant a thorough investigation.

Officials concluded that Arakawa likely died first, around February 11, the last time she was known to be alive. The autopsy concluded that she had died from hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS), with no other diseases or trauma being detected.

Hackman likely succumbed to heart disease about a week later, based on his pacemaker's last record of activity. Given how advanced his Alzheimer's disease was, he may not have known that his wife had passed.

### **WHAT IS HANTAVIRUS?**

A family of rodent-borne viruses that can cause serious illness and death in humans. Infected rodents spread the viruses through their urine, faeces, and saliva. However, these viruses do not spread between people.

### **ARE ALL HANTAVIRUS DISEASES ALIKE?**

No. There are different types of hantavirus depending on the region, and each hantavirus is specific to a different rodent host.

HPS is endemic to the Western Hemisphere. The most common HPS-causing hantavirus is carried by the deer mouse.

Haemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS) is another group of illnesses caused by hantaviruses found primarily in Europe and Asia.

### **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HPS?**

Flu-like symptoms present within one to eight weeks of exposure. The patient may experience fatigue, fever, and muscle aches early on. As the disease advances, they may experience respiratory difficulties such as shortness of breath and a tightness in the chest as the lungs fill with fluid.

### **IS THERE A CURE?**

There is no known cure or treatment for HPS. Early detection and treatment are crucial. However, some antivirals may help manage the symptoms. Some patients experiencing breathing difficulties may need respiratory support like breathing tubes.

Scientists advise people living in areas known to house hantavirus-infected rodents to clean any excrement with a wet paper towel, gloves and a tight-fitting N95 mask. One should avoid using a vacuum or a broom as the aerosols from the droppings may be stirred up. They also advise the use of bleach solution or commercial disinfectant to sanitise the area, and wiping it down with paper towels that are carefully disposed of.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Science & Technology

Source: Indian Express

## **3. Why has India promised to buy more U.S. oil?**

### **Introduction**

India committed to procure more oil and natural gas from the U.S. when Prime Minister Narendra Modi met U.S. President Donald Trump in February in Washington amid tariff threats. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said India's energy purchases from the U.S. could increase from last year's \$15 billion to \$25 billion in the near future.

### **What has India agreed on?**

India is the world's third-largest oil importer and consumer. For a country which relies on imports for more than 85% of its crude oil requirements, any step to secure hydrocarbon supplies is crucial. The country has promised to enhance oil and gas purchase from the U.S., which will bolster energy ties, and also help, to an extent, in achieving the ambitious doubling of bilateral trade to \$500 billion over the next five years. At present, the bilateral trade is in India's favour. The statistics of the Office of the United States Trade Representative show that the goods trade deficit with India was \$45.7 billion in 2024.

What are India's needs on oil and gas?

India imported a total of 234.26 million tonnes of crude oil in 2023-24. Import dependence touched 87.8% against 87.4% in the previous financial year. Domestic production corresponds to less than 13% of the requirement, with domestic crude oil production remaining almost unchanged at 29.36 million tonnes last fiscal (2023-24). In volume terms, the imports were almost similar, but the import bill in 2023-24 declined year-on-year to \$133.37 billion on the back of lower international rates. In 2022-23, the oil import bill was \$157.53 billion.

Additionally, India spent \$22.93 billion on the import of 48.69 million tonnes of petroleum products like LPG, fuel oil and petcoke. It also exported 62.59 million tonnes of products for \$47.72 billion.

India also imports LNG. In 2023-24, the country imported 31.80 billion cubic metres (bcm) for \$13.405 billion. In recent years, the U.S. has emerged as one of the largest suppliers of LNG to India.

### **What are India's plans on LNG?**

The IEA, in its India Gas Market Report: Outlook to 2030, says the country's gas consumption is set to reach 103 bcm annually by the end of the decade. Emerging from a decade of slow growth and periodic declines, the country's natural gas demand increased by more than 10% in both 2023 and 2024, indicating an inflection point. India's domestic gas production, which met 50% of demand in 2023, is projected to grow, reaching just under 38 bcm by 2030.

### **Broadly, what is India's energy roadmap?**

The government is pursuing a multi-pronged strategy to reduce import dependency and substituting demand for crude oil. It is also pushing renewable and alternative fuels such as ethanol, compressed biogas and biodiesel, alongside the establishment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: The Hindu

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