

DAILY NEWSP APER ANALYSIS

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UAE announces exit from OPEC group weakening cartel's bargaining power

Associated Press
DUBAI

The United Arab Emirates said Tuesday it will leave the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) effective May 1, stripping the oil cartel of its third-largest producer and further weakening its leverage over global oil supplies and prices.

The UAE's decision had been rumored as a possibility for some time, as it pushed back in recent years against OPEC production quotas it felt had been too low – meaning it wasn't able to sell as much oil to the world as it had wanted. "Having invested heavily in expanding energy production capacity in recent years, the bigger picture is that the UAE has been itching to pump more oil," Capital Economics wrote in an analysis.

"The ties binding OPEC members together have loosened," it said, particularly after Qatar withdrew from the cartel in 2019.

Regional politics are also likely at play. The UAE has had increasingly frosty relations with Saudi Arabia, OPEC's largest producer, over political and economic matters in the Mideast, even after both came under attack by fellow OPEC member Iran during the war.

The UAE's withdrawal from OPEC won't necessarily have any immediate effects in markets because oil supplies are sharply constrained by the war in Iran, which has closed off the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway through which one-fifth of global oil supplies – including much of the UAE's – is transported. On Tuesday, Brent crude, the international benchmark, traded above \$111 a barrel, or more than 50% above its prewar price.

OPEC accounts for roughly 40% of the world's oil output, but its market



The move had been rumored as a possibility for some time with the UAE pushing back against production quotas in recent years. AFP

President Trump 'unhappy' with Iran's peace proposal

Reuters
DUBAI/WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump is unhappy with the latest Iranian proposal on resolving the two-month war, a U.S. official said.

Iran's latest proposal

would set aside discussion on its nuclear programme until the war, on hold following a ceasefire is ended and disputes over shipping from the Gulf are resolved.

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power had been waning in recent years as the United States ramped up production. While Saudi Arabia had been producing more than 10 million barrels of oil a day before the war, the U.S. pumps more than 13 million barrels a day.

U.S. President Donald Trump has been a steady critic of the cartel during his two terms.

The UAE, which joined OPEC through its emirate of Abu Dhabi in 1967, had been producing around 3.4 million barrels of crude a day just before the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran began on Feb. 28. Analysts say it has capacity to produce 5 million barrels a day.

In its announcement on Tuesday, made via its state-run WAM news agency, the UAE said it also would leave the wider OPEC group, which Russia had led to try to stabilize oil prices.

"This decision reflects the UAE's long-term strategic and economic vision and evolving energy pro-

file, including accelerated investment in domestic energy production," the UAE said, adding that it would bring "additional production to market in a gradual and measured manner, aligned with demand and market conditions."

The UAE's exit removes one of OPEC's few members with the ability to quickly raise production, said Jorge Leon, head of geopolitical analysis at Rystad Energy. "A structurally weaker OPEC, with less spare capacity concentrated within the group, will find it increasingly difficult to calibrate supply and stabilise prices," he said.

While Saudi Arabia and OPEC had no immediate reaction, Emirati Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazrouei insisted his country's decision did not stem from any dispute with its Gulf neighbour.

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- Rising competition:
 - United States produces >13 million barrels/day, weakening OPEC's dominance.
- OPEC cohesion weakening:
 - Qatar exited in 2019.
- UAE exit reduces OPEC's spare capacity, limiting its ability to stabilize prices.

Static Linkages

- Cartel: A group of producers controlling supply to influence prices.
- Price elasticity of demand for crude oil is inelastic in short run.
- Strategic importance of Strait of Hormuz (~20% global oil trade).
- Energy security: Ensuring affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy supply.
- Balance of payments impact due to crude oil imports (India imports ~85% crude).
- Role of non-OPEC producers (e.g., USA shale oil) in global supply dynamics.

Critical Analysis

Positives

- UAE gains production autonomy and higher revenues.
- Reflects declining cartelization in global oil markets.
- Increased supply potential may stabilize prices long-term.

Negatives

- Weakens OPEC's ability to manage price volatility.
- May trigger competitive overproduction ("race to pump").
- Increased geopolitical fragmentation in West Asia.
- Greater uncertainty in global energy markets.

Stakeholder Perspectives

- UAE: Economic diversification + maximize oil revenues.
- Saudi Arabia: Loss of influence within OPEC.
- Oil-importing countries (e.g., India): Mixed impact – price volatility risk.
- USA: Gains strategic advantage as top producer.

Way Forward

- Strengthen global energy cooperation frameworks beyond OPEC.
- Diversification toward renewable energy (aligned with IEA, NITI Aayog outlook).
- Strategic petroleum reserves expansion (India initiative).
- Promote stable supply chains through diplomatic engagement in West Asia.
- Encourage market-based pricing mechanisms over cartel control.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will lose a key member as United Arab Emirates exits effective May 1.
- UAE is the third-largest producer in OPEC and among few members with significant spare production capacity.
- The decision follows disagreements over production quotas and evolving geopolitical tensions, particularly with Saudi Arabia.
- Exit also includes withdrawal from OPEC+ (Russia-led extended grouping).
- Occurs amid global oil disruptions due to tensions involving Iran and closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Key Points

- OPEC accounts for ~40% of global oil production (Economic Survey data).
- UAE production:
 - Current: ~3.4 million barrels/day
 - Capacity: ~5 million barrels/day
- UAE seeks to increase output beyond OPEC quotas.
- Oil prices surged (Brent > \$111/barrel) due to geopolitical disruptions.

Industrial output growth hits 5-month low of 4.1%

Slowdown in construction and consumer-centric sectors pull down Industrial Production growth in the first month of data since the war began in West Asia, with construction growth almost halving

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Growth in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) slowed to a five-month low of 4.1% in March 2026, the first month of data after the West Asia crisis began, pulled down by a near-halving in construction sector growth rates and low growth in consumer-centric sectors.

Data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Tuesday showed that growth in the IIP has been slowing since January, even before the West Asia crisis broke out on February 28.

Economists point out that the full economic impact of the crisis will play out over the next few months.

For the full financial year 2025-26, growth in the IIP stood at 4.1%, marginally faster than the 4.07% recorded in 2024-25.

According to Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at the Bank of Baroda, the

Slippery slope

Latest official data showed that IIP growth has been slowing since January 2026, even before the West Asia war began



growth of 4.1% in March is 'impressive given that the core sector growth was negative for the month'.

Data released earlier this month had shown the eight core sectors, which make up about 40% of the IIP, had contracted 0.4% in March.

Manufacturing hit

Within the IIP, the manufacturing sector slowed to a five-month low of 4.3% in March, although this was faster than the 4% recorded last March.

'Domestic manufacturing has begun to bear the

brunt of costlier and tighter supplies of petroleum products and natural gas,' Dipati Deshpande, principal economist at Crisil, said.

Growth in the capital goods sector, notably, accelerated to a 29-month high 14.6% in March from an already-robust 12.4% in February.

While growth in the infrastructure and construction sector slowed to a nine-month low of 6.7%, economists still felt it highlighted strength in the economy.

'Importantly, the strength in capital goods and infrastructure goods (6.7%) underscores that investment-led demand remains intact, even as consumer non-durables posted a muted 1.1% rise,' Vikrant Chaturvedi, associate director of research at Brickwork Ratings said.

The 1.1% rise in consumer non-durables came on a low base as the sector had contracted 4% in March last year.

According to Ms. Deshpande, this is not the first data point showing the stress in the manufacturing sector.

'The Purchasing Managers' Index also slipped in March from February but remained in the expansion zone, indicating the likely uneven impact of the conflict across sectors and time based on their ability to absorb the shock.'

'The March data captures only a part of the shock as uncertainty and weak producer sentiment have yet to fully manifest in production data,' she added.

'The deeper impact is expected to show up down the road, particularly in the first quarter of this fiscal.'

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) growth slowed to 4.1% in March 2026, the lowest in five months.
- The slowdown coincides with the West Asia crisis (Feb 2026), affecting energy prices and supply chains.
- Data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation shows that the deceleration had already begun in January 2026.
- The eight core industries (~40% weight in IIP) contracted by 0.4% in March.
- Overall IIP growth for FY 2025-26 stood at 4.1%, only marginally higher than the previous year.

Key Highlights

- Manufacturing: Slowed to 4.3% → impacted by higher energy input costs.
- Infrastructure & Construction: Moderated to 6.7%, but still indicates resilience.
- Capital Goods: Increased sharply to 14.6% → strong investment activity.
- Consumer Non-Durables: Weak growth at 1.1% → subdued consumption demand.

Inference:

- Investment demand remains strong, but consumption demand is weak.
- External shocks (energy crisis) are beginning to impact industrial output.

Static Concepts

- IIP is a short-term indicator of industrial growth.
- Base year: 2011-12.

- Published monthly by NSO under MoSPI.
- Sectoral composition:
 - Manufacturing (~77.6%)
 - Mining (~14.4%)
 - Electricity (~8%)
- Eight Core Industries: Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilisers, Steel, Cement, Electricity.
- PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index):
 - 50 → Expansion
 - <50 → Contraction

Critical Analysis

Positives:

- Strong capital goods growth indicates revival in investment cycle.
- Infrastructure sector continues to support growth.
- IIP remains positive despite core sector contraction → resilience.

Concerns:

- Weak consumer demand signals slowdown in broad-based growth.
- Rising energy costs impacting manufacturing competitiveness.
- Dependence on external energy sources exposes vulnerability.
- Lag effect of geopolitical crisis may worsen future data.

Way Forward

- Reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels; promote renewables.
- Strengthen domestic demand through targeted policy measures.
- Enhance manufacturing efficiency under Make in India & PLI schemes.
- Improve logistics and supply chain resilience.
- Maintain macroeconomic stability (inflation-growth balance).

Rajnath Singh calls for unified SCO approach to eliminate terrorism

The Minister says the real test for SCO members lies in maintaining consistency and rejecting double standard, particularly in addressing state-sponsored cross-border terrorism; he calls for a more 'orderly world' rather than a 'new world order'

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

Terrorism remains the most serious threat to global peace and the emerging world order. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said while addressing the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting in Bishkek.

Emphasising zero tolerance, he called for a unified and consistent approach to eliminate terrorism, extremism, and radicalism in all forms.

Mr. Singh underscored that terrorism cannot be justified under any circumstances, asserting that it has no nationality and no theology. He stressed that no grievance, real or perceived, can excuse violence against innocent people.

Highlighting the importance of credibility, he said the real test for SCO member states lies in maintaining consistency and rejecting 'double standard', particularly in addressing state-sponsored cross-border terrorism and safe havens.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addressing the SCO Defence Ministers' meet in Bishkek on Tuesday. ANI

der terrorism and safe havens.

Referring to the Pahalgam terror attack, Mr. Singh said the carnage had shaken the conscience of humanity and reaffirmed India's resolve to hold perpetrators accountable. He noted that through Operation Sindoor, India demonstrated that terrorism epicentres were no longer immune from response.

He also recalled the Tianjin Declaration, which reflects the collective commitment of SCO nations to combat terrorism decisively.

'Three evils'

The Defence Minister highlighted the role of SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure in countering radicalisation and extremism.

He said tackling the "three evils" – terrorism, separatism and extremism – required a unified front, stronger cooperation, and

decisive action against those who supported or sheltered terror networks.

Beyond security concerns, Mr. Singh pointed to the broader global context marked by increasing unilateralism, conflicts, and a fractured world order. He noted that nations were becoming more inward-looking, weakening global consensus, and cooperation. In such a scenario, he said, the SCO has a pivotal role to play in promoting stability, dialogue and mutual respect.

ity, dialogue and mutual respect.

Describing the SCO region as home to some of the world's most ancient civilisations, Mr. Singh said it reflected a shared heritage of cultural exchange, trade and cooperation. He emphasised that this legacy should guide member nations in addressing present-day challenges collectively.

Calling for a more "orderly world" rather than a new world order, Mr. Singh stressed the need for dignity, respect, and peaceful coexistence among nations. He urged SCO members to prioritise diplomacy over conflict and ensure that the current era was defined by peace and prosperity, not war.

Reaffirming India's commitment, Mr. Singh invoked the philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" – the world is one family – and expressed confidence that stronger cooperation within the SCO could transform regional security challenges into opportunities for lasting peace and stability.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- Rajnath Singh addressed the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting in Bishkek.
- He emphasized that terrorism is the gravest threat to global peace and emerging world order.
- Reiterated India's policy of "zero tolerance" against terrorism.
- Highlighted the need for collective global action against terrorism, extremism, and radicalism.
- Reference made to Pahalgam terror attack and India's response via Operation Sindoor.
- Mentioned SCO's commitment via Tianjin Declaration.

Key Points

- Terrorism has no nationality or religion; cannot be justified under any circumstances.
- Called for uniform global standards—no selective or "double standard" approach.
- Strong criticism of state-sponsored cross-border terrorism and safe havens.
- Emphasis on tackling SCO's "three evils":
 - Terrorism
 - Separatism
 - Extremism
- Highlighted role of SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS).
- Noted global trends:
 - Rising unilateralism
 - Weakening multilateral cooperation
 - Fragmented global order
- Advocated for an "orderly world" based on cooperation, not conflict.
- Reaffirmed India's philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (world is one family).

Static Linkages

- UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006)
- Definition issues: Absence of universally accepted definition of terrorism
- India's legal framework:
 - Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967
 - National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008
- FATF (Financial Action Task Force) – Anti-money laundering & terror financing
- Principles of sovereignty and non-interference in international relations
- Role of multilateral organizations in maintaining peace and security
- Cross-border terrorism as a challenge to territorial integrity
- Ethical principle: Ends do not justify means (violence against innocents unjustifiable)

Critical Analysis

Advantages

- Strengthens India's global anti-terror stance.
- Promotes multilateral cooperation in Eurasia.
- Addresses double standards in global terrorism discourse.

Challenges

- No common definition of terrorism globally.
- SCO members have conflicting geopolitical interests.
- Weak enforcement mechanisms in SCO.
- Risk of politicisation of terrorism issues.

Way Forward

- Push for early adoption of CCIT at UN.
- Strengthen intelligence sharing (SCO RATS).
- Ensure global accountability for terror financing (FATF).
- Promote counter-radicalisation strategies.
- Balance security with human rights protections.

A recusal test the Delhi High Court failed

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma of the Delhi High Court refused to recuse herself from hearing the Delhi liquor policy case - *Central Bureau of Investigation vs Kuldeep Singh and Ors.* (April 20, 2026) - involving the former Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal, and others. This episode marks an unfortunate deviation from India's jurisprudence on judicial recusal.



Kaleswaram Raj
Lawyer at the
Supreme Court
of India

Mr. Kejriwal argued the recusal plea by appearing as party in person in the High Court. He submitted that the judge should not hear the Central Bureau of Investigation's plea against the discharge of the accused, including himself, in the excise policy case, as ordered by the trial court. The prominent grounds cited in his plea included adverse findings by the judge in earlier proceedings in the same case; the judge's alleged ideological proclivity, as reflected in her attendance at events organised by the Akhil Bharatiya Adhikari Parishad, or ABAP (a lawyers' organisation inclined towards the political philosophy of the ruling regime at the Centre); the fact that the judge's children were working as panel advocates under the Centre/government, with case files to be allotted by the Solicitor General, who, incidentally, was representing the opposing side in the case; and a statement by Home Minister Amit Shah implying that Mr. Kejriwal would lose the case in the High Court. Because of these factors, he contended that he reasonably apprehended bias in the process of adjudication.

Law on recusal
The law on recusal of a judge is not codified in India. It is more an ethical issue than a technical one. Yet, the jurisprudence on recusal is rich as it takes in precedents and best practices across the globe. The 19th century idea about judges with their Victorian overtones is reflected in the British case of *Leson vs General Council of Medical Education and Registration* (1889) where Lord Bowen said that like Caesar's wife, judges should be above suspicion. The proverbial idea that justice should not only be done but also be seen to have been done was articulated by Lord Howart in *R v Sussex Justices* (1923).

What transpired in the Delhi High Court exposes the risk of judges not strictly adhering to the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, the draft of which was finalised at the Round Table Meeting of judges from many countries at The Hague in 2002. They enunciate independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, competence and diligence as accepted 'judicial values'. Among other things, they say that "a

Judicial recusal principles have been tested in the Delhi liquor policy case

judge shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all of the judge's activities".

In *Ranjit Thakur vs Union of India and Ors.* (1987), the Supreme Court of India explained that the 'proper approach' for a judge when faced with a request for recusal "is not to look at his own mind and ask himself, however, honestly, 'Am I biased?', but to look at the mind of the party before him". In *P.K. Ghosh, J.S. and Ant. vs J.G. Rajput* (1995) the Court said that when the litigant feels on reasonable basis that a particular judge should not hear his case, and when there are alternatives, recusal by the judge is the appropriate course, for maintaining public confidence in the system. In *State of Punjab vs Davinder Pal Singh Bhullar and Ors. Etc.* (2011), the Court said that "a mere ground of appearance of bias and not actual bias is enough to vitiate the judgment/order".

In *Supreme Court Advocates-On-Record Association vs Union of India* (2015), the Court reiterated some of the judicial values. The judgment said, "The simple question is, whether the adjudication by the judge concerned, would cause a reasonable doubt in the mind of a reasonably informed litigant and fair-minded public as to his impartiality." Unlike administrative decision making, where the adjudicative authority is often stipulated in the statute or the rule, there is no doctrine of necessity in judicial proceedings when there are alternatives.

The judgment of the top court in *State of W.B. vs Shivananda Purkai* (1998) was an admonition against judicial obstinacy. Thus, with the possible exceptions such as Justice Arun Mishra's refusal to recuse in *Indore Development Authority vs Manoharlal And Ors.* (2019), the Supreme Court has, by and large, rejected the "duty to sit doctrine" evolved in the United States.

The challenge before the judge

Legal scholar James Sample opined that "the teachable moments on disqualification are in the Court's Court". This, again, is a call not only for ensuring fairness but also for maintaining the appearance of fairness. The real challenge before the judge is to overcome the possibility for subjectivity in adjudicative process especially when the very same judge whose recusal is sought is deciding the question of recusal.

Distinguished American jurist Benjamin N. Cardozo famously wrote, "We may try to see things as objectively as we please. None the less, we can never see them with any eyes except our own." The maxim that no one should sit in judgment in her own cause is too well settled.

Viewed in the light of these principles, Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma should have recused herself or at least insisted that the recusal plea should be placed before another judge for hearing. Such a course would have facilitated a more objective evaluation of the contentions raised by Mr. Kejriwal apart from averting the present scenario. But neither of these happened and the present judgment followed.

Fairness of process

The judgment issued on April 20, 2026 does not reflect the correct judicial approach. The judge said that she had to decide between a litigant and herself. It was further stated in the judgment that the stipulation of bias expressed in the recusal plea was unfounded and that the allegations were manufactured. The judge asked, "... if the children of politicians can enter politics, how would it be just to question the children of a judge who study like others, struggle like others, and prove themselves in Court like others to earn their livelihood?" One would wonder if this was the argument made by Mr. Kejriwal.

Mr. Kejriwal, in his rejoinder, had reportedly said that "conflict arises not from prior participation in the present proceedings, but from the admitted existence of a live, active and ongoing professional relationship with the prosecuting side". The judge also justified her attendance at an event organised by the ABAP, and stated that she had attended events conducted by academic bodies as well. The judgment mistakes criticism of the judge as one of judicial establishment. The verdict is also self-defensive, argumentative and accusatorial rather than analytical. It is vulnerable to further legal challenge. After the judgment, Mr. Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia wrote letters to the judge stating that they would not participate in further proceedings before her in the present matter.

In a case with serious political ramifications, the grounds raised by Mr. Kejriwal and others were relevant and required a more objective assessment, rather than a subjective affirmation based on a notion of a "presumption of impartiality", as stated in the judgment. The verdict substitutes the well-settled legal position that a reasonable apprehension of bias is sufficient for a plea of recusal with a requirement to demonstrate actual bias. This is patently erroneous.

The judge rightly said that, in the recusal plea, she was effectively being tried by the litigant. But the outcome of this "trial", unless corrected, will remain an embarrassing precedent for a system already in crisis.

- Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association vs Union of India (2015) → reasonable apprehension test
- Ethical standards:
 - Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct → impartiality, integrity, propriety
- Core concern:
 - Judge deciding her own recusal plea → potential violation of natural justice principles

Static Linkages

- Nemo judex in causa sua
- Principles of natural justice
- Article 14 – fairness and equality before law
- Judicial independence – Basic Structure doctrine
- Reasonable apprehension of bias vs actual bias
- Public confidence in judicial process

Critical Analysis

Positives

- Prevents misuse of recusal as a litigation strategy (forum shopping)
- Protects judicial independence from external pressure

Concerns

- Departure from "reasonable apprehension of bias" standard
- Self-adjudication of recusal undermines fairness
- Risk to institutional credibility and public trust
- Blurring of ethical standards and legal thresholds

Key Issue

- Substitution of appearance of bias with requirement of proof of actual bias, which contradicts established jurisprudence

Way Forward

- Frame clear guidelines or codified principles on recusal
- Recusal applications to be decided by an independent bench
- Mandatory disclosure of potential conflicts of interest
- Strengthen adherence to Bangalore Principles
- Enhance transparency in judicial functioning
- Capacity building on judicial ethics

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma declined to recuse from hearing the Delhi excise policy case involving Arvind Kejriwal.
- Case: CBI vs Kuldeep Singh & Ors. (April 2026), where the Central Bureau of Investigation challenged discharge of accused.
- Grounds cited for recusal:
 - Prior judicial observations in the same matter
 - Alleged ideological association
 - Professional links of judge's family with government
 - Public remarks by Amit Shah
- The plea was rejected → raises concerns on judicial impartiality and standards of recusal.

Key Points

- Judicial recusal:
 - Not codified in India; governed by judicial ethics and precedents
 - Aims to ensure fair trial and public confidence
- Core principle:
 - "Justice must not only be done but must also be seen to be done"
- Established jurisprudence:
 - Ranjit Thakur vs Union of India (1987) → perspective of a reasonable litigant
 - P.K. Ghosh vs J.G. Rajput (1995) → recusal preserves public confidence
 - State of Punjab vs Davinder Pal Singh Bhullar (2011) → appearance of bias sufficient

The RTE Act and the idea of social inclusion

In its January 2026 judgment, the Supreme Court of India reaffirmed the purpose of Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, the landmark provision that reserves 25% of seats in private schools for students from economically weaker sections and socially disadvantaged groups. In words that are deeply symbolic, the Court observed that this provision makes it possible for "the child of a multi-millionaire or even of a Judge of the Supreme Court of India to sit in the same classroom and at the same bench as the child of an autorickshaw driver or a street vendor". The judgment reassured that this provision is a deliberate constitutional strategy to operationalise equality of status by creating shared learning spaces for all children.

This sentiment of social integration often comes alive in thousands of stories across the country. Take Karthik, a footwear vendor, and his wife, Sumita, for example. They always dreamed of providing their children with quality education despite their modest income. This became possible when their younger son joined a reputed private school through this provision. The boy thrived in the new environment, excelling in academics and his favourite sport, kabaddi. Teachers nurtured his growth, while classmates became close friends. For Karthik and Sumita, the RTE Act did not just change their son's future; it altered their family's life trajectory, with the potential to lift them out of poverty. Stories such as Prem's are often told as narratives of access – of doors opened and opportunities unlocked. But at stake is not simply where a child studies, but whether the circumstances of their birth continue to determine the boundaries of their social world.

A constitutional strategy
Despite its intent, Section 12(1)(c) is frequently mischaracterised as a tool to promote private



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The Supreme Court of India's judgment strengthens the vision of a socially integrated education system

schooling or to allow the state to outsource its constitutional duty to public education, citing falling government school enrolment alongside rising private school admissions.

This reading is misplaced. First, Section 12(1)(c) does not dilute the state's duty to invest in public schools, but recognises that the right to free and compulsory elementary education, and the creation of shared learning spaces, must be realised within a schooling ecosystem where private schools are not incidental actors but natural participants in fulfilling a constitutional mandate. The RTE Act does not create a zero-sum contest between public and private institutions; it seeks to foster integrated educational spaces.

Second, the shift towards private schooling predates the RTE Act. The Annual Status of Education (ASER) Report of 2006 documents significant movement into private schools "at the expense of government school enrolment". Declining admissions in government schools are rooted in deeper concerns around infrastructure, teacher presence, and perceived quality – not in Section 12(1)(c) itself.

Evidence from the ground

Since its rollout, over five million children have walked through the doors of educational spaces previously out of reach, with retention rates averaging over 90%. In cities such as Delhi and Ahmedabad, blended classrooms are no longer exceptions; they are the norm. Research (such as that by Rao, Gautam, 2019) indicates that mixed classrooms lead to increased generosity, reduced discrimination, and stronger pro-social behaviour, without any adverse impact on academic outcomes or classroom discipline. At scale, implementation has also stabilised: reimbursements under Section 12(1)(c) are centrally streamlined, and State-level online Management Information Systems (MIS) ensure

transparent, low-discretion processing.

For children from disadvantaged backgrounds, these classrooms offer more than just academics. They provide access to social capital, previously unexplored aspirations, peer networks, and institutional cultures. These experiences translate into higher self-belief, enhanced ambition, and a broader worldview.

Acknowledging challenges

There is no denying the challenges that persist in the implementation of Section 12(1)(c). Some private schools continue to resist full inclusion, while families often bear hidden costs for uniforms, books and materials. Implementation remains uneven across States, with persistent gaps in transparency, grievance redress, and last-mile outreach and disbursements.

These challenges do not change the fact that Section 12(1)(c) was not meant to rely solely on moral persuasion – it requires clear, enforceable rules to succeed. Encouragingly, recent experience demonstrates that these gaps are neither inevitable nor insurmountable. State-driven digital admission systems and improved monitoring mechanisms – particularly in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Delhi – have significantly strengthened access and accountability.

The Court's reaffirmation of Section 12(1)(c) makes clear that it is neither a retreat from public education nor an endorsement of private schooling. The challenge now is administrative. States must ensure timely reimbursements, remove hidden costs by private schools, strengthen grievance redress, and enforce inclusion norms so that equality is experienced. The real test is whether we can operationalise the constitutional promise of social integration with the seriousness needed to match the ambition we hold for our children.

Static Linkages

- Article 21A – Right to free and compulsory education
- Article 14 – Equality before law
- Article 15(3) & 15(4) – Affirmative action provisions
- Preamble – Equality of status and opportunity
- Directive Principles – Social justice and welfare state
- Concept of substantive equality
- Education as an instrument of social change

Critical Analysis

Positives

- Ensures access to quality private education for disadvantaged children
- Promotes social inclusion and integration in classrooms
- Builds social capital and peer learning opportunities
- Reflects constitutional vision of equality and justice

Challenges

- Delay in reimbursements to private schools
- Presence of hidden costs (uniforms, books, transport)
- Uneven implementation across states
- Resistance from some private institutions
- Possible social exclusion within classrooms

Way Forward

- Ensure timely reimbursement mechanisms
- Strict enforcement to eliminate hidden costs
- Strengthen monitoring and grievance redress systems
- Simultaneously improve quality of government schools
- Promote awareness and sensitization for inclusive education
- Use technology-driven systems for transparency and efficiency

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- January 2026: Supreme Court of India reaffirmed the constitutional importance of Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education Act, 2009.
- The provision mandates 25% reservation in private unaided schools for children from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and disadvantaged groups.
- The Court emphasized that the provision is a constitutional tool for achieving equality of status through shared educational spaces.

Key Points

- Applies to entry-level classes (Class I or pre-school stage).
- Covers:
 - Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)
 - Socially disadvantaged groups
- State reimburses private schools based on per-child expenditure in government schools.
- Implementation outcomes:
 - Over 5 million children benefited
 - Retention rate above 90%
- Key impacts:
 - Promotes inclusive and equitable education
 - Encourages social integration across class barriers
 - Enhances aspirations, confidence, and social mobility
- Administrative improvements:
 - Digital admission systems (e.g., Delhi, Rajasthan)
 - Online MIS for transparency

A false high

The SIR's impact must be factored in before reading turnout figures

There is a tendency in India to reduce democracy to the mere conduct of elections, and to confine political life to "political society" – that subset of the population actively engaged in setting policy and in mediating welfare delivery. This points to a democracy that falls short of a deliberative or deeply participative model, even in socio-economically better-off States such as Tamil Nadu (T.N.) and Kerala. Yet, elections are not a one-off event, and turnout remains a useful dipstick for the vibrancy of the democratic exercise, particularly in India where the poorer sections vote in large numbers. By that measure, the headline figures from T.N. and the first phase of the poll in West Bengal appear daunting and unprecedented. According to provisional Election Commission of India (ECI) data, 93.2% of voters turned out in the first phase in West Bengal and 85.1% in T.N. These record numbers must be read against the backdrop of the ECI's Special Intensive Revision (SIR), which led to massive net voter deletions. In T.N., the rolls shrank by 10.5% from the pre-SIR figure, while in West Bengal nearly 13% of the electorate was deleted, with the eligibility of lakhs of voters still being heard by tribunals. If this is factored in, the percentage turnout begins to look inflated by a reduced denominator (total electorate) rather than by genuinely expanded participation (the numerator). The absolute increase in turnout in T.N. – about 27 lakh votes on provisional figures – was in fact among the lowest in recent electoral cycles, suggesting that wrongful deletions may have suppressed real participation even if the SIR did clear the electoral rolls of those who had died or moved out. The effect was sharpest in cities such as Chennai, where several constituencies recorded turnout above 80%, a jump of over 20 percentage points, even though the absolute number of voters – around 24 lakh – remained virtually unchanged from the 2021 elections.

It is also difficult to read too much into turnout in either State. High turnout has long been a feature of politically charged West Bengal, and T.N. has also been no slouch in recent electoral cycles compared to the rest of India. Also, political scientists have found little correlation between turnout levels and pro- or anti-incumbency outcomes. Once published, turnout percentages tend to acquire a life of their own and are cited as proof of democratic enthusiasm or the strength of a mandate, or, in T.N.'s case, the impact of a new political player such as actor Vijay's Tamila-ga Vettri Kazhagam. But a percentage is only as meaningful as the denominator it rests on, and in these two States, the denominator itself has been substantially altered. Turnout figures must therefore be read alongside how the electorate was determined before any conclusions about the mandate are drawn from the actual results.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- Recent elections in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal recorded exceptionally high voter turnout:
 - Tamil Nadu: ~85.1%
 - West Bengal (Phase 1): ~93.2% (provisional)
- Data released by the Election Commission of India.
- The elections followed a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.
- SIR led to substantial deletion of voters:
 - Tamil Nadu: ~10.5% reduction
 - West Bengal: ~13% reduction
- Concerns raised that high turnout percentages may be inflated due to a reduced voter base, not necessarily increased participation.

Key Points

- Turnout Interpretation
 - Turnout = $\text{Votes cast} \div \text{Total electorate}$
 - Reduction in electorate → higher turnout % without real increase in voters
- Absolute vs Percentage Turnout
 - Tamil Nadu saw only ~27 lakh increase in votes, one of the lowest in recent cycles

- Indicates possible suppression or exclusion of genuine voters
- Electoral Roll Revision (SIR)
 - Objective: Remove duplicate, deceased, shifted voters
 - Issue: Risk of wrongful deletions, especially among vulnerable groups
- Urban Trends
 - Cities like Chennai recorded sharp increases in turnout %
 - However, absolute number of voters remained nearly unchanged
- Turnout and Electoral Outcomes
 - Empirical studies show no direct correlation between turnout and:
 - Electoral mandate
 - Incumbency outcomes

Static Linkages

- Article 324: Vests election management powers in ECI
- Article 326: Provides for Universal Adult Suffrage
- Representation of the People Act, 1950: Preparation of electoral rolls
- Representation of the People Act, 1951: Conduct of elections
- Free and fair elections are part of the Basic Structure Doctrine
- Electoral rolls must ensure inclusiveness and accuracy

Critical Analysis

Positives

- High turnout indicates continued public faith in elections
- SIR helps maintain clean and updated electoral rolls
- Strong participation of lower-income groups supports inclusive democracy

Concerns

- Inflated turnout figures due to reduced denominator
- Risk of disenfranchisement of genuine voters
- Lack of transparency and accountability in voter deletions
- Over-reliance on turnout as a measure of democratic health
- Limited focus on deliberative and participatory democracy

Key Issue

- Distinction between:
 - Procedural democracy (elections, turnout)
 - Substantive democracy (inclusion, participation, deliberation)

Way Forward

- Ensure transparent and verifiable electoral roll revision
- Strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms for deleted voters
- Conduct independent audits of electoral rolls
- Use technology cautiously (e.g., Aadhaar linkage with safeguards)
- Promote continuous democratic engagement beyond elections
- Focus on both participation rate and inclusiveness

Battle of wills

The U.S. should lift its blockade so that Iran can open the Strait of Hormuz

The U.S. war on Iran has turned into a battle of wills in the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, marked by duelling naval blockades and stalled diplomacy. Iran, which has effectively restricted the free flow of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz since the U.S. and Israel attacks on February 28, has refused to ease its control over the critical waterway. The U.S. insists that its blockade of Iranian ports will stay in place until a deal is reached. Last week, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi travelled to Pakistan, which mediated the first round of direct talks on April 11, but Iran declined further direct talks with Washington. The White House had earlier said it would send special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to Islamabad, but President Donald Trump cancelled their trip after Mr. Araghchi left the Pakistani capital. Mr. Trump has repeatedly said that Iran wants a deal. Yet, Tehran continues to refuse talks with the U.S., citing Israel's attacks on Lebanon and America's blockade in the Gulf of Oman. On paper, a ceasefire is in place in Lebanon, and Mr. Trump said earlier this month that Israel was "prohibited" from attacking the country, but Israeli air strikes have continued. He has also indicated no urgency to lift the blockade, betting that sustained economic pressure will force Iran to change its position.

The only silver lining is that the Iran ceasefire, announced on April 8, is still holding. Despite Mr. Trump's threats, he has held fire even after Iran seized ships in the Persian Gulf. Tehran, too, despite warning retaliation over a U.S. seizure of an Iranian tanker, has not followed through. Both sides have remained diplomatically engaged through Pakistan. The alternative to diplomacy is disaster. The U.S. and Israel bombed Iran for 40 days but failed to secure a favourable strategic outcome, and the global economic fallout of this illegal war is now being felt. For diplomacy to succeed, Mr. Trump and the Iranian leadership should adopt a phased approach. Rather than acting as if the war has not changed the region's strategic realities, the U.S. should offer tangible concessions to Iran in return for compromises on core issues. Iran has demonstrated a measure of deterrence by asserting control over the Strait of Hormuz. But if it continues to disrupt commercial traffic, further damaging the global economy, it risks squandering the goodwill it enjoys as the underdog. A practical first step would be reciprocal de-escalation: the U.S. lifting its blockade and Iran reopening the Strait to commercial shipping. This would also reinforce the fragile ceasefire and build confidence, paving the way for the next round of direct talks on outstanding issues, including the nuclear programme.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- Escalation of tensions between the U.S. and Iran has led to a naval standoff in the Strait of Hormuz.
- Iran has restricted commercial shipping following U.S.-Israel strikes (Feb 28).
- The U.S. has imposed a blockade on Iranian ports, linking its removal to a broader diplomatic deal.
- A fragile ceasefire (April 8) continues despite intermittent hostilities.
- Indirect diplomacy via Pakistan has not yet produced results.
- The crisis has triggered global concerns over energy supply disruptions and trade instability.

Key Points

- The Strait of Hormuz accounts for ~20% of global petroleum trade (IEA).
- It is a critical maritime chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf to global markets.
- Iran is using its geographical leverage for strategic deterrence.

- The U.S. strategy relies on economic pressure through blockade.
- The situation has led to volatility in global oil prices.
- India is particularly vulnerable due to ~85% dependence on crude oil imports (Economic Survey).

Static Linkages

- The Strait connects the Persian Gulf → Gulf of Oman → Arabian Sea.
- It is among the world's most significant strategic chokepoints.
- Transit passage is guaranteed under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- Coastal states cannot arbitrarily restrict navigation in international straits.
- Disruptions impact inflation, fiscal stability, and balance of payments.
- Central to India's energy security and West Asia engagement.

Critical Analysis

Strategic Dimensions

- Iran's control over the strait enhances its deterrence capability.
- U.S. blockade reflects coercive diplomacy in geopolitics.

Economic Impact

- Disruption leads to oil price shocks → inflation → CAD pressure (India).
- Affects global supply chains and trade flows.

Legal Issues

- Raises concerns over freedom of navigation under UNCLOS.
- Peacetime blockades remain legally contentious.

Diplomatic Challenges

- Lack of mutual trust between U.S. and Iran.
- Continued Israeli involvement complicates negotiations.
- Limited effectiveness of third-party mediation.

Way Forward

- Adopt phased reciprocal de-escalation (blockade removal vs. reopening shipping lanes).
- Strengthen multilateral diplomacy and neutral mediation mechanisms.
- Ensure adherence to international maritime law (UNCLOS).
- India should enhance energy diversification and strategic petroleum reserves (SPR).
- Promote regional stability frameworks in West Asia.

In great-power games over Hormuz, law yields to force



ABHILIX SINGH

THE CRISIS in the Strait of Hormuz has settled into a dangerous equilibrium. With prospects for talks uncertain, Iran and the US remain locked in a tense standoff—neither willing to yield, both prepared to impose costs. This is not merely an episode of strategic posturing with collateral consequences. It is far more consequential: An unravelling of the long-settled relationship between law and power at sea. For perhaps the first time in contemporary maritime practice, a critical global chokepoint is subject to competing coercive regimes, each seeking to regulate access through force.

Commercial shipping is operating within a settled legal order; rather, it navigates a contested space in which the right of transit passage in an international strait is neither acknowledged nor reliably assured. This is a profound departure from the logic that has long governed maritime transit. Since Hugo Grotius articulated the idea of *mare liberum* in the early 17th century, the principle of open seas has underpinned the evolution of modern maritime law, finding formal expression in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. At its core lies the proposition that geography should not be permitted to hold commerce hostage. The transit passage concept was intended to ensure that narrow waterways such as Hormuz are not subject to unilateral control; the right it establishes is non-suspendable and legally binding. Yet, as so often happens in moments of acute crisis, the law has yielded to force.

The challenge is not simply to navigate the present crisis but to adapt to a future in which access at sea may no longer be guaranteed by law alone. That requires not just naval capability, but strategic foresight

With Iran and the US imposing their own logic of access in the strait, commercial operators find themselves in an untenable position. As the US Navy interdicts vessels that it believes sustain Iran's economic capacity, and the IRGC Navy targets and turns back shipping it deems non-compliant, virtually every stakeholder with trade interests in the region finds itself in the crosshairs of the rivalry. This is something more destabilising than a blockade in the classical sense. What we are witnessing is a duelling assertion of control in which neither side can fully close the strait, yet both render its use perilous.

The ramifications are already evident. War-risk insurance premiums have been withdrawn or repriced to prohibitive levels, significantly deterring commercial transit. With shipping lines delaying, rerouting, or suspending operations, flows of crude oil and LNG have been sharply curtailed. The

disruption extends to petrochemicals, fertilisers, aluminium, and other industrial goods that underpin regional and global supply chains. The scale of disruption could well deepen. Left unresolved, the shocks could ripple across the global economy on a scale comparable to the oil crises of the 1970s.

Even so, the strategic logic underpinning the US and Iran's actions in Hormuz is increasingly open to question. Washington appears to assume that constricting Iranian maritime exports will impose decisive economic pressure. Yet it has failed to reckon with the reality that sustained disruption of traffic in Hormuz would inevitably impose costs on US allies and partners, and risks escalation with other stakeholders. Tehran, for its part, is leveraging its geographic position to raise the costs of coercion. In doing so, it risks broadening the conflict and inviting forms of retaliation that may exceed its capacity to manage.

For India, this presents a stark dilemma. As a trading state dependent on external energy flows and open sea lanes, it cannot afford to accept the erosion of transit norms as a new normal. New Delhi, however, has neither the leverage nor the incentive to directly challenge either belligerent. The appropriate response lies in calibrated pragmatism. Operationally, India must ensure the safe transit of Indian shipping through naval escorts and careful deconfliction, while avoiding entanglement in escalation dynamics. Diplomatically, New Delhi must work to underscore the wider stakes involved and support efforts to restore a measure of normalcy to the strait.

At a deeper level, the events in Hormuz carry a more enduring lesson. Long-held assumptions about universal access to the maritime commons are no longer tenable. Chokepoints—from Hormuz to Malacca—are increasingly susceptible to great-power contestations. For countries dependent on maritime trade, this is not a temporary disruption but a structural condition. The challenge is not simply to navigate the present crisis but to adapt to a future in which access at sea may no longer be guaranteed by law alone. That requires not just naval capability, but strategic foresight—and a recognition that the balance between law and leverage at sea is once again in flux.

The writer is a retired naval officer and former head of the maritime policy initiative at ORF, New Delhi.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- Escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran have led to competing control over maritime movement in the Strait of Hormuz.
- Naval actions by both sides (interdictions, restrictions) have disrupted commercial shipping.
- The crisis challenges the established principle of free transit through international straits.
- Global energy supply chains are increasingly affected due to uncertainty and rising risks.

Key Points

- Strait of Hormuz accounts for nearly one-fifth of global oil trade (IEA).
- Emergence of “dual coercion”: neither full blockade nor free navigation.
- War-risk insurance premiums have increased sharply, discouraging shipping.
- Disruptions extend beyond oil to LNG, fertilisers, and petrochemicals.
- Undermines the principle of transit passage under UNCLOS.
- India imports a majority of its crude oil from West Asia, making it vulnerable.

Static Linkages

- *Mare Liberum* (freedom of seas) by Hugo Grotius.
- Transit passage: non-suspendable right under UNCLOS.

- Strategic importance of Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs).
- Energy security and import dependence (Economic Survey, India).
- Geopolitical importance of maritime chokepoints (Hormuz, Malacca).

Critical Analysis

- Erosion of rule-based maritime order and weakening of UNCLOS norms.
- Increased cost of trade → inflationary impact on import-dependent economies like India.
- Heightened risk of military escalation in a sensitive geopolitical region.
- Disproportionate impact on third-party states not directly involved in the conflict.
- Demonstrates vulnerability of global trade to chokepoint disruptions.

Way Forward

- Enhance India's naval capability for securing Sea Lanes of Communication.
- Diversify energy sources and strengthen strategic petroleum reserves.
- Promote adherence to international maritime law through diplomacy.
- Develop alternative connectivity routes (e.g., International North-South Transport Corridor).
- Build resilient supply chains to mitigate external shocks.

Future of medicine : From treatment to balance



SHASHANK
JOSHI

AT a time when non-communicable diseases dominate global health conversations, the thyroid gland, small yet metabolically powerful, is emerging as a barometer of how modern life is altering human biology. At the 35th annual scientific meeting of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology in Las Vegas, the Hossein Gharib Educational Lectureship offered an opportunity to reflect on a small gland with a large message. The lecture, 'Impact of Iodine on Thyroid Autoimmunity, Goiter and Oncogenesis', centred on one simple truth: In thyroid physiology, more is not always better. Both deficiencies and excess can be harmful. The thyroid operates within a narrow biological window, and when iodine intake strays outside this range, disease follows.

The thyroid gland lives by balance. Too little iodine, and it struggles — goiter, hypothyroidism, nodular disease, impaired neurodevelopment. Too much, and it may rebel — autoimmunity, thyrotoxicosis, thyroiditis, altered disease patterns. Endocrinologists call this a U-shaped curve. Life calls it wisdom. For decades, iodine deficiency was the enemy. Iodised salt became one of public health's greatest success stories, including in India. But today, iodine exposure is no longer limited to dieting. Iodine also comes from supplements, seaweed-based products, processed foods, iodinated contrast, antiseptics, and unregulated "health" practices. Environmental exposures, from plastics like bisphenol A to fluoride and other endocrine-disrupting chemicals, are interacting with iodine biology in ways that amplify risk.

The thyroid is exquisitely sensitive to such shifts. It needs iodine to make T3 and T4, hormones that influence metabolism, growth, energy, and brain development. Yet when iodine crosses its biological threshold, the same nutrient can disturb the very gland it was meant to nourish. Truly, dose becomes biology. Even more concerning is the growing evidence that excess iodine may enhance thyroid autoimmunity. A newer concern is the "double hit" model, where iodine imbalance interacts with endocrine-disrupting chemicals, which may interfere with thyroid hormone signalling, iodine uptake, and immune balance. There is also growing evidence linking iodine excess to cardiovascular changes, metabolic dysfunction, and alterations in the gut microbiome, the complex ecosystem increasingly recognised as central to immune and endocrine health. This is where medicine must become more attentive. Behind every TSH, T3, and T4 value is a person — what they eat, what they inhale, what they apply, what they believe is "natural," and what their body is trying to balance.

The lesson is also spiritual. Vedanta has long taught that harmony, not accumulation, sustains life. The Bhagavad Gita reminds us that moderation in food, sleep, action, and thought leads to well-being. The thyroid seems to repeat the same truth: Neither deprivation nor excess creates health. Endocrinology calls this homeostasis. Indian wisdom calls it *samatra* — equanimity, balance. In iodine intake, as in human living, the path is not "more" or "less," but "right". The future of medicine must therefore move from precision treatment to precision balance — knowing what is enough, what is too much, and what each individual truly needs. Health is not the victory of excess. It is the art of alignment.

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The Bhagavad Gita reminds us that moderation in food, sleep, action, and thought leads to well-being. The thyroid seems to repeat the same truth: Neither deprivation nor excess creates health

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context

- Recent deliberations at the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology highlighted the impact of iodine imbalance on thyroid disorders.
- Shift from earlier focus on iodine deficiency to emerging risks of iodine excess due to modern lifestyle sources.
- Emphasis on U-shaped relationship → both deficiency and excess harmful.

Key Points

- **Thyroid Basics**
 - Requires iodine to synthesize T3 and T4 hormones → regulate metabolism, growth, brain development.
 - Controlled by TSH (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone) from pituitary.
- **Iodine Deficiency**
 - Causes: goitre, hypothyroidism, cretinism (in children).
 - Public health issue addressed via Universal Salt Iodisation (USI).
- **Iodine Excess**
 - Leads to: autoimmune thyroid diseases, thyrotoxicosis, thyroiditis.

- Increasing due to:
 - Supplements and fortified foods
 - Seaweed-based diets
 - Iodinated contrast agents
- **U-Shaped Curve**
 - Both low and high iodine intake → disease risk.
 - Optimal intake is essential → concept of homeostasis.
- **Emerging Dimensions**
 - Interaction with endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) (e.g., BPA, fluoride).
 - Impact on:
 - Immune system
 - Cardiovascular health
 - Gut microbiome

Static Linkages

- Thyroid gland → endocrine system (NCERT Biology Class XI)
- Hormonal regulation and feedback mechanism
- Micronutrient deficiency diseases
- National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme (NIDDCP)
- Universal Salt Iodisation (USI)
- Endocrine-disrupting chemicals and pollution
- Concept of homeostasis

Critical Analysis

Positives

- Success of iodisation programmes reduced deficiency burden.
- Improved awareness of micronutrient importance.

Negatives / Concerns

- Rising iodine excess due to unregulated intake.
- Lack of awareness about safe upper limits.
- Increasing exposure to EDCs complicating thyroid disorders.

Challenges

- Monitoring population iodine levels.
- Regulating supplements and processed foods.
- Integrating environmental and health policies.

Way Forward

- Shift from deficiency control → optimal intake approach.
- Strengthen monitoring under NIDDCP.
- Regulate supplements and fortified foods.
- Public awareness on safe iodine consumption.
- Control endocrine-disrupting chemicals.
- Promote personalised nutrition and preventive healthcare.