

Important Issues of the Day

Glass Industry in Tight Spot [17]

Air India to Impose Fuel Surcharge on Domestic Flights [17]

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West Asian War and Glass Industry in India

Government Action:

- The Indian government has invoked the **Essential Commodities Act, 1955** to regulate and **prioritize natural gas allocation**.

The Restriction:

- Industrial consumers (including glass plants) will now receive only **80%** of their **average gas consumption from the past six months**.

The Reason:

- This is due to **supply uncertainties of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)** caused by the **ongoing conflict in West Asia**.



Why the Glass Industry is Vulnerable

Continuous Processing:

- Glass manufacturing requires **round-the-clock heating**. Unlike other factories, a **glass furnace cannot be "switched off" and "on" easily**.

Technical Risk:

- If a furnace **stops even for 30 minutes**, it can suffer **permanent structural damage**.

Financial Impact:

- Restarting a **damaged furnace** can cost **crores of rupees** and **involves long "gestation periods"** (the time it takes to get back to full production).



Strategic Importance of Glass

- The industry is seeking relief by citing its role in **essential sectors**, similar to the **exemptions** it received **during COVID-19**:

Healthcare:

- Production of vials, **ampoules**, and **cartridges** for **vaccines** and life-saving medicines.

Food Safety:

- Packaging for **essential food products**.

Infrastructure:

- Glass is a **critical component** in construction and **strategic sectors**.

Economic Scale:

- India produces **26,000 tonnes** of glass daily, **80% of which** is consumed **domestically**.



Q1. With reference to the development of the glass industry in India and related recent news, consider the following statements:

1. The city of Kalibangan, Rajasthan accounting for nearly 70% of India's glass bangle production, is widely recognized as the "Glass City of India."
2. In early 2026, the Government of India initiated the development of the nation's first dedicated glass museum in Ghaziabad, Uttarpradesh, to promote international glass artistry.
3. The proposed glass museum is a ₹47 crore project designed to showcase traditional techniques alongside modern artistry over an area exceeding 25,000 sqm.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

A) Only one

B) Only two

C) Only three

D) None

Recent Related News

- Firozabad, a city in Uttar Pradesh has been recognized and promoted as the "**Glass City of India**" due to its status as the nation's **largest hub for glassmaking and bangle production**.

India's First Glass Museum:

- In **early 2026**, the Uttar Pradesh government initiated the development of the **country's first dedicated glass museum in Firozabad**.

Project Scope:

- The museum is a **₹47 crore project** spread across **25,700 sqm**, designed to showcase the **city's rich glass heritage, traditional techniques, and modern artistry**.

Global Impact:

- Firozabad **accounts for approximately 70%** of India's glass **bangle production** and **exports various glassware** items, including **chandeliers** and **tableware**, to **international markets**.

Outside of India, **Toledo, Ohio, in the United States**, is historically known as "The Glass City" due to its significant role in the American glass industry.

Q2. With reference to the current crisis in the Indian glass industry as per recent reports, consider the following statements:

1. The government has invoked the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, to ensure that glass manufacturing receives a 100% priority allocation of natural gas during West Asian conflicts.
2. A significant portion of the natural gas supply uncertainty stems from geopolitical tensions affecting shipments through the Strait of Malacca.
3. While glass furnaces can utilize dual-fuel firing systems, technical limitations prevent these furnaces from operating entirely without natural gas.
4. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the glass industry was denied exemptions.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- A) Only one B) Only two C) Only three D) All four

ATF Price Rise

- Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF), also known as **jet fuel**, is a specialized kerosene-based petroleum product used to power aircraft with **gas-turbine engines**.
- It is characterized by **high energy density**, a **low freezing point** (crucial for high-altitude flight), and a **high flash point** to ensure **safety during handling**



The Core Event: Air India's Price Hike

Air India and Air India Express have introduced a **Fuel Surcharge** on **domestic** and **international flights**.

Why?

- Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices have **spiked globally**.

The Cost Factor:

- ATF accounts for nearly **40%** of an **airline's total operating costs**.

Taxation Impact:

- In India, the high cost is worsened by central **Excise Duty** and state **VAT** (Value Added Tax), which vary by city (e.g., Delhi vs. Mumbai).

A Comparative Example: Delhi vs. Mumbai (March 2026)

Tax Component	Delhi (VAT 19.4%)	Mumbai (VAT 25%)
Base Price	₹75,000	₹75,000
Central Excise (11%)	+ ₹8,250	+ ₹8,250
State VAT	+ ₹16,148 (applied on Base + Excise)	+ ₹20,812 (applied on Base + Excise)
Final Price to Airline	₹99,398	₹104,062

Geopolitical Triggers

- **The "Double Whammy" for India:**
 1. **Strait of Hormuz:** A critical maritime chokepoint is **effectively blocked**. Since **20% of global oil/gas passes** here, supplies have tightened.
 2. **Pakistan Airspace Ban:** Pakistan has **banned Indian airlines** from its airspace. This **forces Indian planes to take longer routes to Europe and North America**, burning **significantly more fuel**.



Geographical "Chokepoints"

- **Strait of Hormuz:**
 - Connects the **Persian Gulf** and the **Gulf of Oman**. It is the world's most important oil transit channel.
- **SAARC Countries:**
 - The surcharge applies to neighbors like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Economic Implications for India

Operational Strain:

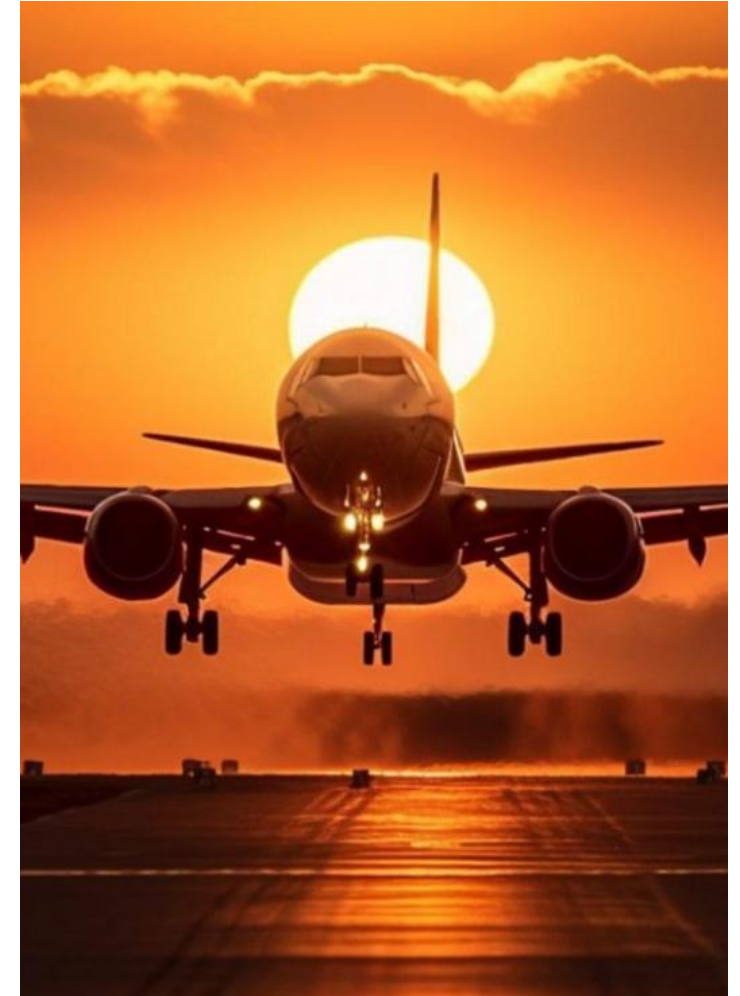
- Without these surcharges, **airlines risk becoming unviable** (unable to cover costs), leading to **potential flight cancellations**.

Phased Rollout:

- The **hike is not immediate for everyone**; it applies to new **bookings in three phases** (Domestic/SAARC first, then Europe/US, then Far East).

Consumer Impact:

- Travel **becomes more expensive**, which can **reduce tourism and business mobility**, impacting the **broader economy**.



Q3. With reference to Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) and the Indian aviation sector, consider the following statements:

1. ATF is currently categorized as a 'Zero-Rated' supply under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime.
2. The cost of fuel typically constitutes nearly 40% of an Indian airline's total operating expenses.
3. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz directly impacts global fuel prices primarily due to demand-side shocks and volume scarcity.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 only
- C) 2 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2, and 3

Amrit Bharat Station Scheme [17]

- **Objective:** To modernize and redevelop railway stations across India.
- **Scope:** Focuses on improving amenities, accessibility, cleanliness, and safety standards.
- **Current Status:**
 - **Total stations identified:** 1,337.
 - **Completed:** 172 stations.
 - **Under Progress:** 1,072 stations.
 - **Total Railway Infrastructure:** India has approximately **8,000 railway stations and halts.**

Parliamentary Committee Recommendations

- **Passenger Satisfaction:** The committee advised the Railways to conduct **periodic assessments** of how **satisfied passengers** are with the **upgrades**.
- **Impact Evaluation:** It recommended post-redevelopment evaluations to see if the **upgrades actually met their goals**.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Feedback and grievance redressal mechanisms should be an **integral part of the redevelopment** process to ensure constant service improvement.

Grievance Redressal & Feedback (RailMadad)

- **Platform: RailMadad** is the primary grievance redressal platform for Indian Railways.
- **Access Channels:** Passengers can lodge complaints or give feedback via:
 - Helpline Number **139**.
 - RailMadad website.
 - Mobile App.
 - SMS.
- **Performance Data:** Between April 2025 and January 2026, about **70% of feedback** regarding amenities at redeveloped stations was rated as "excellent" or "satisfactory."

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme:

1. The scheme aims to prepare long-term Master Plans for over 1,000 railway stations, ensuring their implementation is carried out in a single, comprehensive phase to minimize cost overruns.
2. A key feature of the redeveloped stations is the creation of 'City Centres' on both sides of the station, integrated with 'One Station One Product' (OSOP) stalls to promote local heritage.
3. The RailMadad portal serves as the primary digital interface for the scheme, where parliamentary committees directly monitor and adjudicate individual passenger grievances in real-time.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

A) Only one

B) Only two

C) All three

D) None

Impeachment of CEC

- The Opposition, led by the Trinamool Congress (TMC), is drafting a motion to remove the CEC.
- They allege "**biased conduct,**" specifically claiming the Election Commission **unfairly targeted West Bengal** during **electoral roll revisions**



- **The Legal Basis**
- The removal process is governed by:
- **Article 324(5):** States the CEC can only be removed in the same manner as a **Supreme Court Judge**.
- **The 2023 Act:** Reaffirms that the CEC's tenure and removal follow constitutional standards.

The Removal Process (Simplified)

- To remove a CEC, the following steps must occur under the **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968**:
- **The Motion:**
 - Must be signed by **100 MPs** (Lok Sabha) or **50 MPs** (Rajya Sabha).
- **Admission:**
- The Speaker or Chairman decides whether to admit the motion.
- **Investigation:**
 - If admitted, a **three-member committee** (a SC judge, a HC Chief Justice, and a jurist) investigates the charges of "proved misbehaviour or incapacity."
- **Special Majority:**
 - If guilty, both Houses must pass the motion by a **two-thirds majority** of those present and voting.
- **President's Order:**
 - The President finalizes the removal.

Q5. With reference to the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India, consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution of India explicitly lists "proved misbehaviour or incapacity" as the grounds for the removal of the CEC.
2. A motion for the removal of the CEC must be supported by a majority of the total membership of each House and a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting.
3. While the CEC is removed in a manner similar to a Supreme Court Judge, the Election Commissioners can be removed by the President only on the recommendation of the CEC.
4. If a three-member inquiry committee finds the CEC "not guilty" of the charges, the Parliament can still proceed with the removal motion if the Speaker or Chairman deems the matter of public importance.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1, 2, and 3 only (B) 2 and 3 only (C) 1, 3, and 4 only (D) 1, 2, 3, and 4