

India 'seizes' three US-sanctioned oil tankers linked to Iran

Surendra.Singh
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Indian coastal authorities reportedly "seized three US-sanctioned tankers linked to Iran" earlier this month, a source informed TOI on Monday. The vessel seizures follow the improvement in India-US relations with Washington announcing recently that it would cut import tariffs on Indian goods to 18% from 50%.

In a related development, US military forces boarded another sanctioned tanker in the Indian Ocean after tracking it from the Caribbean Sea, in an effort to target illicit oil trade connected to Venezuela, the Pentagon said Sunday. 'Shadow fleet' vessels Stel-



A file photo of Asphalt Star

lar Ruby, Asphalt Star and Al Jafzia carrying sanctioned Iranian oil were seized on Feb 6. India's unprecedented enforcement action took place the same day that Washington and New Delhi unveiled a major bilateral trade framework.

Iran, too, had seized a tanker, MT Valiant Roar, on Dec 8 with 16 Indian crew on board. Of the 16, eight have been freed.

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First Class X Board exam must under 2-test system, says CBSE

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has clarified it will be mandatory for all Class X students to appear in the first board examination under the new two-board exam system to be rolled out from 2026. Students who fail to appear in at least three subjects in the first exam will be placed in the "essential repeat" category and will not be allowed to sit for the second board exam, officials said.

CBSE has also urged students, parents and schools not to be misled by rumours of question paper leaks as the Class X and XII board exams begin on Tuesday.

The clarification follows requests received by the board seeking permission for students who miss the first exam to directly appear in the second one.

CBSE has rejected such



CBSE also urged students to not be misled by paper-leak rumours

requests, saying the policy does not allow any relaxation. CBSE examination controller Sanyam Bhardwaj said, "It is mandatory for all students to appear in the first board examination. All passed and eligible students will be allowed to improve their performance in any of the three subjects out of science, mathematics, social science and languages."

"If a student has not ap-

peared in three or more subjects in the first examination, he or she will not be allowed to appear in the second examination. Such students will be placed in the 'Essential Repeat' category and can take the examination only next year in the main examinations in the month of Feb next year," he said.

Students who get a compartment in the first exam will be allowed to appear in the second exam under the compartment category.

The board has also made it clear additional or stand-alone subjects will not be permitted after passing Class X, and any request seeking exemption from these rules will not be entertained.

Over 46 lakh students from India and abroad are set to appear for CBSE board exams. While the Class X exams will conclude on March 10, Class XII exams will end on April 9.

India in talks with 30+ nations to curb AI misuse: Vaishnaw

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Electronics and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Monday said India is in discussions with ministers from over 30 countries to develop common technical and legal solutions to tackle the misuse of AI in media, as deepfakes and synthetic content pose growing risks to trust, democracy and creative industries.

At the AI Impact Summit, Vaishnaw said rapid innovation without safeguards can become a liability. He stressed that govt is working on stringent rules to mandate watermarking and clear labelling of AI-generated content to protect authenticity of human creativity and original work.

During a fireside conversation with Motion Picture Association chairman and CEO, Charles Rivkin, where discussions focused on safeguarding creators while enabling responsible use of AI in media and entertainment, Vaishnaw warned that misinformation, disinformation and deepfakes are "attacking the foundations of society" and said the responsibility to prevent misuse rests not just with govts but also with social media platforms, AI model developers and content creators.

"Freedom of speech itself relies on trust, and that trust



At the summit, Vaishnaw said that rapid innovation without safeguards can become a liability

must be protected," he said, adding issues such as deepfake and data breaches must be treated as "non-negotiable" by society. Govts across the world are seeking to balance development along with regulation so that growth is not stifled.

India will soon roll out a 'Create in India' mission to boost its 'orange economy' and position the country as a global creative hub, Vaishnaw announced. The initiative is designed as a long-term, industry- and employment-focused push to drive the next 25 years of economic growth by strengthening India's creative and cultural industries.

He said the country's fast-growing creator economy is already benefiting from strong digital public infrastructure and a large, skilled talent base, giving India a natural edge as a preferred global platform for creative production.

Modi will host French prez in Mumbai today

Def, Tech, Trade Ties Likely To Get A Boost

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India and France will look to further upgrade their defence, trade and technology ties as PM Narendra Modi hosts French President Emmanuel Macron for a bilateral meeting in Mumbai on Tuesday. During his three-day visit to India, Macron will also participate in the AI summit in Delhi on Thursday.

Official sources said close to a dozen agreements/MoUs are likely to be signed after the bilateral meeting in areas like defence, trade, skilling, health, and supply chains. In Mumbai, the leaders will jointly inaugurate the India-France Year of Innovation which will be celebrated through 2026 in both countries, according to the ministry of external affairs. The India-France Year of Innovation and Cultural Commemoration will be held at the Gateway of India on Tuesday evening.

The Indian govt had last week approved a proposal to procure 114 Rafale fighter jets under a govt-to-govt framework from France. India and France will also hold on Tuesday the 6th Annual Defence Dialogue in Bengaluru that is expected to see the renewal of their defence



File photo

During his three-day visit to India, Macron will also take part in the AI summit in Delhi on Thursday. His participation follows his co-chairing with Modi the same summit in France last year

cooperation agreement for another 10 years. Discussions are also likely to focus on greater cooperation involving air and maritime assets, in line with the ambitious Defence Industrial Roadmap agreed to in 2024.

Both leaders will also look to discuss regional and global issues, including the Russia-Ukraine war, the situation in Gaza and the Indo-Pacific region where India sees France as an indispensable partner. With uncertainty looming over Quad, the partnership with France, a resident power in the Indian Ocean, has become even more significant for India.

According to Indian authorities, both leaders will hold discussions on strengthening bilateral cooperation across a wide spectrum of areas as enshrined in the

Horizon 2047 Roadmap that was adopted three years ago, setting the course for bilateral cooperation over the next 25 years. Macron's participation in the AI summit in India follows his co-chairing with Modi the same summit in France last year.

Both leaders had then stressed their common commitment to concrete actions to ensure that the global AI sector can drive social, economic and environmental outcomes in public interest. They are also expected to review progress on the India-France Roadmap on AI, rooted in the "philosophical convergence" in their approaches focusing on the development of safe, open, secure and trustworthy artificial intelligence. The roadmap had been launched last year during Modi's visit to France.

Iran says US now more realistic on N-issue; drills on in Hormuz Strait

Geneva. Iran said on Monday that the US's position on Iran's nuclear programme "has moved towards a more realistic one", a day ahead of a second round of US-Iranian talks in Geneva. Tehran's foreign minister arrived in Geneva for the new round of indirect negotiations with the US, as the Revolutionary Guards began military drills in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping lane for oil and gas.

According to Tehran, talks mediated by Oman will be held on Tuesday in Switzerland. Washington has previously pushed for other topics to be discussed. The war games being conducted by the Guards, the ideological arm of military, aim to prepare it for "potential security and military threats" in the strait, Iranian state TV said.

Iranian politicians have repeatedly threatened to block the strait, a strategic waterway through which about 20 percent of global oil passes, as both sides ramp up pressure with talks set to resume. US secretary of state Marco Rubio told reporters on Monday "we're hopeful there's a deal". "The president always prefers peaceful outcomes and negotiated outcomes to things."

Meanwhile, Iran's top diplomat, Abbas Araghchi, wrote on X that he was meeting in Geneva with the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Grossi, "for deep technical discussion". Grossi later confirmed the meeting on X, calling the conversation with Araghchi "in-depth" ahead of Tuesday's "important talks". AFP