

Current Edge: Daily Brief

30th September 2025

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QUOTES OF THE DAY

"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."
 – **PABLO PICASSO**

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Trump and Netanyahu will face each other on Monday. The responsibility now lies with the US President: he must insist, as he knows how to, and finally bring a deal that will release the hostages and end the bloodbath." – **HAARETZ, ISRAEL**

Why was X's 'censorship' challenge rejected?

Why has the Karnataka High Court dismissed X Corp's petition against the Union government's Sahyog portal? What is the function of this portal, operated by the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre? Has X complied with similar rules in other countries?

TH Text & Context; By Aaratrika Bhaumik;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Polity & Governance [Link](#)



Why in News?

Karnataka HC dismissed X Corp's plea against Union govt's **Sahyog portal**, upholding its legality for content takedown under **Sec. 79(3)(b) IT Act**.

Sahyog Portal: Function & Legal Basis

- Launched: **Oct 2024** by MHA, run by I4C
- **Centralised platform** → takedown orders to ISPs, social media, web hosts
- **Purpose** → operationalise Sec. 79 safe harbour limits

- **Safe harbour conditional** → lost if unlawful content not removed post govt notice
- Case link → *Shabana v. Govt of NCT Delhi (2024)* revealed need for real-time coordination

- **Enforcement inconsistency** → not sustainable solution
- **X plans appeal** → possible larger HC Bench or SC review
- **Conflict with Bombay HC 2023 ruling** (struck down PIB fact-check unit for violating natural justice)

X Corp’s Arguments

- Called Sahyog a “**copyright portal**”
- **Govt using Sec. 79(3)(b)** → bypass Sec. 69A safeguards
- **Sec. 69A** → due process: committee, hearing, reasoned order, judicial review
- **Relied on *Shreya Singhal v. UoI (2015)*** → SC upheld 69A as only valid framework
- **Claimed parallel regime** → arbitrary powers to thousands of officials
- **Supported by DigiPub (92 news outlets)** → disproportionate impact on journalism

Govt’s Defence

- **Internet ≠ traditional media** → faster virality → stricter oversight needed
- **Safe harbour** = statutory privilege, not right
- **Sec. 79 ≠ censorship** → only loss of immunity if non-compliant
- **Sahyog = administrative tool**, not blocking regime
- **X lacks locus standi** → Art. 19 applies only to citizens
- **X complies abroad** (e.g., US) but resists India
- **38 intermediaries** (Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Telegram) already onboard

HC Ruling

- **Petition “devoid of merit”** → Sahyog = “instrument of public good”
- **Article 19 rights only for citizens** → X cannot claim
- **India ≠ “playground” for platforms** to evade accountability
- **Entry into Indian market** → privilege tied to responsibility
- **X complies with US laws** (Take It Down Act 2025) → hypocrisy in India
- **Rejected claim Sahyog lacked legal basis** → 2021 IT Rules = new framework, old precedents not applicable

Implications

- **Expands govt control over online content** → risk of broader censorship
- **Criteria for “unlawful content” remain vague** → selective enforcement risk
- **May curb political accountability & critical reporting**

A brief into key legal provisions and rulings mentioned

Section 79 IT Act, 2000 – Safe Harbour

- Shields intermediaries (social media, ISPs, web hosts) from liability for user content.
- **Exemption lost if:**
 - They aid/abet unlawful activity, OR
 - They fail to remove unlawful content after govt/court notice (Sec. 79(3)(b)).

Section 69A IT Act, 2000 – Blocking Power

- Empowers Central Govt to block online content.
- Grounds → same as Art. 19(2) restrictions (sovereignty, security, public order, etc.).
- Procedural safeguards:
 - Govt committee examines,
 - Intermediary given hearing,
 - Reasoned written order issued,
 - Judicial review possible.

Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015)

- SC struck down Sec. 66A IT Act (vague & arbitrary).
- Upheld Sec. 69A as only valid framework for blocking, with safeguards.
- Clarified → takedown under Sec. 79(3)(b) valid only if based on court order/govt notification.

Test Your Knowledge 01

Q. With reference to the Sahyog portal recently upheld by the Karnataka High Court, consider the following statements:

- 1) It is operated by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- 2) It enables real-time takedown orders under Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act, 2000.

3) Safe harbour protection is automatically available to intermediaries, irrespective of compliance with takedown notices.

Which of the above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Hint:

- Operator = MHA (I4C), not MeitY
- Sec. 79(3)(b) → real-time takedown notices
- Safe harbour = conditional, not automatic

The Iran sanctions snapback: A diplomatic collapse and its wider consequences

India stopped importing Iranian oil years ago, but Chabahar remains vital for accessing Afghanistan and Central Asia while bypassing Pakistan. The US waiver allowed progress despite wider sanctions. Its revocation means we have to reconcile our Eurasian strategy with the new developments

IE Opinion; By Ramachandran Swaminathan;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations [Link](#)

Why in News?

UN sanctions on Iran “snapped back” after UNSC rejected Russia-China resolution for delay → collapse of 30-day diplomacy window.



Trigger & Diplomatic Collapse

- **Israel strikes** (Fordow, Natanz, Isfahan) → US bombing → E3 push diplomacy
- **E3 conditions** → full IAEA inspections, 408.6 kg uranium accounting, talks w/ US
- **Iran** → uranium “trapped under ruins,” rejected US talks, limited IAEA gestures
- **Aug 28** → E3 invoked UNSC 2231 snapback → countdown
- **Russia-China tried 6-mo extension** → failed (4–9–2 vote)

- **Timing:** avoided Oct (Russia UNSC presidency)

Sanctions Re-Imposed

- **Nuclear & missile embargo** → back in force
- **Ban on conventional arms transfers** → asset freeze, banking restrictions
- **No explicit oil embargo**, but US secondary sanctions → decisive
- **UN call for financial vigilance** → ↑ risk for banks/shippers
- **Net effect:** Washington tighter global enforcement grip

Impact on Iran

- **Economy** → ↑ crisis, inflation, social discontent
- **Oil** → China still main buyer, but tougher terms → Beijing ↑ leverage
- **Politics** → Pezeshkian: sanctions “unfair/illegal” (blames 2018 US JCPOA exit)
- **Nuclear path risk** → parallels w/ N Korea under “max pressure”
- **Likely:** suspend IAEA Cairo agreement, but not NPT exit (Moscow/Beijing constraint)

Geopolitical Dimensions

- **Divide:** West vs Russia–China–Iran axis
- **Snapback strengthens rationale** for future Israeli/US strikes
- **Moscow-Beijing influence limited** (failed UNSC resolution)
- **Sanctions ripple effects beyond Iran** → energy, shipping, global markets

India’s Stakes

- **Oil:** imports from Iran already stopped
- **Chabahar Port** (IPGL at Shahid Behesht Terminal) → vital for Afghanistan, Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan
- **US waiver allowed continuity** → now revoked under snapback
- **Strategic dilemma:** reconcile Eurasian connectivity w/ US pressure

Takeaway

- **For Iran** → deeper squeeze, possible nuclear hardening
- **For West** → tactical win, strategic uncertainty
- **For Russia-China** → limited leverage exposed
- **For India** → Chabahar connectivity at risk, strategy recalibration needed

Test Your Knowledge 02

Q. With reference to the recent “snapback” of UN sanctions on Iran, consider the following statements:

- 1) The snapback mechanism is provided under UNSC Resolution 2231 (2015), which endorsed the JCPOA.
- 2) It allows any permanent member of the Security Council to veto the re-imposition of sanctions.
- 3) Once invoked, it restores all prior UN sanctions without the need for a fresh UNSC vote.

Which of the above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Hint: The mechanism under UNSC 2231 is automatic once invoked → no fresh vote, no veto possible.

The Wassenaar Arrangement: the need to reform export control regimes

While the Arrangement has expanded to include controls on ‘intrusion software’, the structure of the Arrangement is such that control means physical exports of devices, chips, and hardware modules. As a result, many information flows related to cloud services fall in grey areas

IE Explained; By Vasudevan Mukunth;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations [Link](#)

Why in News?

Microsoft Azure contracts with Israel sparked debate on gaps in Wassenaar Arrangement’s export controls in cloud era.



Wassenaar Arrangement: Basics

- **Multilateral voluntary regime (1996)** → 42 states → controls on conventional arms & dual-use tech

- **Commitments** → common control lists, info sharing, national discretion in licensing/enforcement
- **Expansion 2013** → added “intrusion software” controls
- **Limitation** → designed for physical exports (devices, chips), weak for SaaS/cloud

Key Gaps

- **Cloud services** → info flows in grey zone, not always “export”
- **SaaS model** → remote use ≠ traditional export
- **Consensus-based** → 1 member can block reform
- **Domestic laws differ** → patchy enforcement, loopholes (e.g. defensive security research)
- **Weak on human rights risk** → focus remains WMD/military use

India’s Position

- **Joined 2017** → aligned with SCOMET (export control framework)
- **Role** → more legitimacy seeking than pushing reform
- **Current stance** → little focus on cloud/surveillance risks

Reform Needs

- **Scope expansion** → include cloud infra, surveillance, biometric & cross-border data systems
- **Export definition** → treat API calls, remote admin rights, cloud access as exports
- **End-use controls** → license decisions based on specs + user identity, jurisdiction, oversight, HR risk
- **Binding nature** → treaty-level rules, peer review, denial mandates in atrocity-prone contexts
- **Global coordination** → shared watchlists, red alerts, technical interoperability standards
- **Agility** → technical secretariat, interim updates, sunset clauses, domain-specific regimes (AI, cyber weapons)

Challenges to Reform

- **State resistance** → innovation concerns, sovereignty, private industry lobbying
- **Intricacy** → mapping cloud to control categories, benign vs malign use, cross-border licensing
- **Consensus hurdle** → few holdouts can block changes

Emerging Pathways

- **EU dual-use regulation** → treats cloud service transmission as export
- **UN Guiding Principles leverage** → corporate HR duties + procurement rules as incentives
- **U.S. EAR & EU rules** → still draw legitimacy from WA lists
- **Industry reference** → Microsoft compliance cites WA, but SaaS realities expose major gaps

Test Your Knowledge 03

Q. With reference to the Wassenaar Arrangement, consider the following statements:

- 1) It is a binding treaty under the United Nations Security Council aimed at controlling weapons of mass destruction.
- 2) Its control lists include dual-use goods, conventional arms, and since 2013, certain categories of “intrusion software.”
- 3) Decisions in the Arrangement are based on consensus among member states.
- 4) India is a founding member of the Arrangement and incorporated its lists into SCOMET at the time of joining.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 3 and 4 only

Hint: WA is voluntary (not binding, not UNSC, not WMD-specific) → India joined only in 2017 (not founding) → lists expanded in 2013 to intrusion software → decisions by consensus.



News / Explained / India wins second mineral exploration contract in the Indian Ocean: What is this, why it matters

India wins second mineral exploration contract in the Indian Ocean: What is this, why it matters

India now commands the largest area allocated in the international seabed for Polymetallic Sulphides exploration. Here's why that matters.

IE Explained; By Anjali Marar;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Geography & Environment [Link](#)

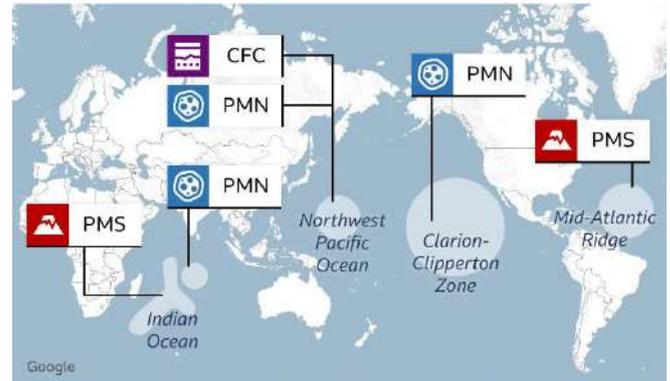
Why in News?

India signed 2nd ISA contract → exclusive rights for **Polymetallic Sulphides (PMS)** exploration in

Carlsberg Ridge, Indian Ocean → 1st nation with 2 PMS contracts → largest PMS area allotted globally.

Exploration areas for minerals in the international seabed area*

Contracts with the ISA for exploration



Number of active contracts

- Polymetallic nodules (PMN): 19
- Polymetallic sulphides (PMS): 7
- Cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts (CFC): 4

*The part under ISA jurisdiction is defined as “the seabed and ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.”

Source: International Seabed Authority (ISA)



PMS & Its Importance

- **Composition** → Cu, Zn, Pb, Au, Ag + trace REEs/precious elements
- **Uses** → high-tech, RE, EVs, green tech
- **India’s challenge** → land reserves limited, import dependence ↑
- **PMS origin** → hydrothermal vents, deposition from mineral-rich hot gush

India’s PMS Journey

- **2016** → 1st ISA contract (Central & SW Indian Ridge)
- **NCPOR lead agency** → 3-phase exploration (survey → AUV/ROV mapping → resource eval)
- **Deep Ocean Mission** → infra boost (deep-sea vessels, AUVs, ROVs)
- **Samudrayaan & “Matsya” vehicle** → human-submersible support

Carlsberg Ridge Significance

- **Location** → Mid-ocean ridge b/w Indian & Somali plates (~2°N, closer to India)
- **Geology** → slow-spreading ridge (2.4–3.3 cm/yr), hydrothermal vent presence
- **Strategic** → nearer than earlier contracts (~26°S) → easier ops, ↑ security value
- **Research base** → 3 decades of Indian studies in region

PMS vs Other Underwater Minerals

- **Terrain** → hard, uneven, 2000–5000m depth (more complex than nodules/crusts)
- **Tech needs** → deep-sea vessels w/ dynamic positioning, precision nav & comms
- **Tools** → ship-mounted geophysics, AUVs, ROVs, advanced samplers & labs
- **Multidisciplinary** → geology, oceanography, biology, deep-sea tech

ISA Allocation Mechanism

- **Legal base** → UNCLOS framework
- **Process** → nation applies w/ work plan, env. baseline, tech/finance proofs
- **Review** → Legal & Technical Commission → ISA Council approval
- **India's edge** → proven capability + earlier track record

Future Outlook

- India eyeing cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts → Afanasy-Nikitin Seamount (CIO)
- Fits Govt. **Blue Economy** vision → strategic minerals + energy security

Test Your Knowledge 04

Q. With reference to Polymetallic Sulphides (PMS) found on the ocean floor, consider the following statements:

- 1) PMS deposits are typically associated with hydrothermal vents along mid-ocean ridges.
- 2) They are rich in copper, zinc, and gold but do not contain rare earth elements.
- 3) Exploration of PMS is less technologically challenging than exploration of polymetallic nodules due to their shallower occurrence.

Which of the above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Hint:

- PMS → hydrothermal vents
- They do contain trace REEs
- PMS terrain harder & deeper (2000–5000m) → more challenging than nodules

News / Explained / Debate around assisted death: Should individuals have a right to die?

Debate around assisted death: Should individuals have a right to die?

Actress Ruth Posner, 96, died at a suicide clinic in Switzerland last week because she felt that life with her "failing senses...and lack of energy was not living but existing"

IE Explained; By Arjun Sengupta;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Ethics [Link](#)

Why in News?

Ruth Posner (96) and her husband chose assisted death in Switzerland, renewing ethical and legal debates on the right to die.



Ethical Arguments For Assisted Death

- **Autonomy** ♦ death as ultimate personal choice, free from external mediation
- **Dignity in dying** ♦ prevents prolonged existence without quality of life
- **Relief from suffering** ♦ compassion > prolongation of pain
- **Consistency with refusal of treatment** ♦ patients already allowed to refuse life-support → assisted death a logical extension
- **Utilitarian benefit** ♦ resource allocation to patients with better survival prospects
- **Authenticity of agency** ♦ surveys show elderly fear dependence > death itself
- **Philosophical precedent** ♦ Plato: those without health should be allowed to die
- **Palliative care limits** ♦ medicine cannot always eliminate pain or indignity
- **Psychological peace** ♦ option itself provides comfort even if not exercised

Ethical Arguments Against Assisted Death

- **Autonomy paradox** ♦ no autonomy once life ends → undermines argument
- **Slippery slope** ♦ criteria expand → from terminal illness → disability → depression
- **Devaluation of life** ♦ risks creating societal pressure on elderly/disabled to “choose” death
- **Subjectivity of suffering** ♦ no clear threshold → teenager with depression vs cancer patient
- **Medical ethics** ♦ violates Hippocratic oath “do no harm”
- **Social coercion** ♦ vulnerable groups (elderly, disabled, poor) may be subtly pushed toward death
- **Normalisation risk** ♦ joint suicides once tragic, now socially acceptable in some cultures
- **Psychological distortion** ♦ short-term despair may lead to irreversible decision
- **Historical misuse** ♦ Nazi eugenics (“lives not worth living”) used suffering as justification
- **Alternative available** ♦ ↑ palliative/hospice care can reduce suffering without ending life

Other Models

- Netherlands, Belgium, Canada: broader access (incl. some psychiatric cases) but strict monitoring
 - US (few states): physician-assisted suicide allowed under “Death with Dignity” laws
-

Legal Frameworks

India

- SC 2018: “Right to die with dignity” part of Art. 21
- Permits *passive euthanasia* (withdrawing life-support) + living wills
- No active assisted dying (positive act causing death)
- Concerns: misuse by families, weak oversight, cultural resistance

UK

- Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, 2024
- Age ≥18, terminal illness only, excludes disability/mental disorder
- Court approval mandatory, reflection periods, 12-month residency rule

Switzerland

- Liberal regime, no residency requirement → “death tourism”
- Physician must confirm patient acted autonomously, not for selfish motives