

URGENT NEED

At a time when humanity has achieved unprecedented scientific, technological and economic progress, the global community continues to grapple with conflicts, wars and political tensions. From regional disputes to full-scale military confrontations, the persistence of violence reminds us that peace remains one of the most urgent and universal aspirations of humankind. Across continents, ordinary people share a common desire: a world where security, dignity and stability replace fear and uncertainty. History has repeatedly shown that war brings devastation far beyond the battlefield. Lives are lost, families are displaced and economies are shattered. Infrastructure built over decades can be destroyed within days, and generations may suffer the long-term consequences of conflict. In recent years, global crises and conflicts have disrupted food supplies, strained energy resources and deepened humanitarian emergencies. Such realities highlight a simple but powerful truth-war rarely solves problems; it often multiplies them.

The modern world is more interconnected than ever before. Trade, technology, communication and culture link societies in ways unimaginable in the past. This interdependence means that instability in one region can affect the entire global community. Economic shocks, refugee crises and security threats do not respect borders. As a result, peace is no longer just a moral aspiration; it is a strategic necessity for global development and stability.

Diplomacy remains the most effective pathway to peace. Dialogue, negotiation and international cooperation have historically prevented conflicts from escalating and have helped resolve long-standing disputes. Multilateral institutions and diplomatic forums provide platforms where nations can address disagreements through discussion rather than confrontation. While diplomacy may sometimes appear slow or complicated, it is far less costly than war-both in human lives and economic resources.

Equally important is the role of responsible leadership. Political leaders carry the responsibility of prioritizing national interests without undermining global harmony. True leadership lies not in displays of power but in the ability to build consensus, promote understanding and seek solutions that benefit humanity as a whole. Nations that invest in cooperation rather than confrontation contribute to a more stable and prosperous world.

Another critical dimension of peace lies within societies themselves. Social justice, economic opportunity and respect for human rights are essential foundations for lasting stability. When people feel marginalized, excluded or deprived of basic rights, tensions can escalate into unrest and conflict. Governments, institutions and communities must therefore work together to ensure inclusive development and equitable access to resources.

Education and cultural exchange also play a powerful role in building peace. By fostering mutual respect and understanding among diverse communities, societies can reduce prejudice and mistrust. Young people in particular must be encouraged to value dialogue, tolerance and cooperation. A generation raised with these principles can become the strongest advocates for peace in the future.

Technology and media, while sometimes amplifying divisions, also hold immense potential to promote unity. Information platforms can raise awareness about the human cost of conflict and highlight the benefits of peaceful cooperation. Responsible communication can help counter misinformation and encourage constructive public discourse.

Ultimately, peace is not merely the absence of war; it is the presence of justice, cooperation and shared progress. It requires commitment from governments, institutions and citizens alike. The global community stands at a crossroads where choices made today will shape the future of humanity. If nations prioritize dialogue, mutual respect and collective well-being, the dream of a peaceful world can move closer to reality.

Energy Crisis, Speculation and Responsible Politics in Difficult Times

The world is currently passing through a difficult phase due to the ongoing conflict involving Iran, Israel, and the United States. Wars in strategically important regions often affect global trade, especially energy trade. Oil and gas supply routes pass through sensitive maritime areas, and any disruption immediately affects the global economy. Today the world is witnessing uncertainty in the energy market. Prices of petroleum products and LPG are rising in international markets, supply chains are under pressure, and energy security of many countries is being questioned. For growing economies like India, such developments create additional challenges because energy is the backbone of economic growth, industrial production, transportation, and daily life.

One of the most sensitive points in global energy trade is the Strait of Hormuz. A large share of the world's crude oil and natural gas passes through this narrow maritime route connecting the Persian Gulf to global markets. Any tension in this region creates fear among traders, oil companies, and governments. The current geopolitical tensions have once again brought attention to this vital route. When ships carrying crude oil face delays or security concerns, supply becomes uncertain and prices increase in international markets. This situation does not affect only one region; it impacts the entire world economy.

India is among the fastest-growing large economies in the world. According to recent economic assessments, India's GDP growth is expected to remain above 7 percent, making it one of the strongest performing economies globally. However, such growth requires a stable supply of energy. India imports nearly 85 percent of its crude oil requirements from foreign countries. This means that any disruption in global energy supply immediately affects domestic markets. Even a small increase in international crude oil prices increases the import bill of the country and puts pressure on inflation, transportation costs, and industrial

production. Another important factor is LPG consumption. India has significantly expanded LPG access in the last decade through welfare programs and rural energy initiatives. Today more than 30 crore households use LPG cylinders for cooking. This expansion has improved living standards, reduced indoor pollution, and supported women's health. However, it also means that demand for LPG has increased substantially. If global supply is disrupted due to war or geopolitical tensions, it becomes a challenge for governments to maintain stable prices and supply for such a large consumer base.

The ongoing conflict in West Asia has already created volatility in global oil markets. International crude oil prices have shown sudden fluctuations because traders fear supply disruptions. Oil shipping companies also charge higher insurance and transportation costs during times of conflict. These additional costs ultimately affect importing nations. Many countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa are already facing rising energy prices and limited supplies. Industries that depend heavily on petroleum products such as transport, aviation, manufacturing, fertilizers, and petrochemicals are particularly vulnerable.

India is also feeling the pressure, though the government has taken several steps to manage the situation. One important development is India's effort to diversify its sources of energy imports. Over the last few years, India has significantly increased oil imports from Russia. Currently, Russia has become one of the largest suppliers of crude oil to India. Reports suggest that India is importing around 35 to 40 percent of its crude oil from Russia, which is much higher than earlier years. In addition to Russia, India continues to import energy from countries such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. This diversification strategy helps reduce dependency on a single region.

Another important step has been diplomatic engagement. India has been actively communi-

cating with countries in the Gulf region to ensure that Indian ships carrying energy supplies can move safely. Efforts have also been made to maintain smooth passage through the Strait of Hormuz. Diplomatic coordination is essential because uninterrupted maritime trade is necessary for energy security. Reports indicate that arrangements have been made to allow safe movement of Indian vessels so that energy supplies continue without major disruption.

Despite these efforts, the biggest challenge sometimes comes not from supply shortages but from public panic and misinformation. In recent days, many parts of the country have witnessed long queues outside petrol pumps and LPG distribution centres. People fear that petroleum products may become unavailable in the coming days. As a result, many consumers are purchasing more fuel than they normally need. This sudden increase in demand creates artificial shortages even when sufficient stock is available.

Speculation plays a major role in such situations. When rumours spread that petrol, diesel, or LPG may run out, people begin storing extra fuel. Distributors and hoarders sometimes take advantage of the situation by holding back supplies to sell them later at higher prices. This kind of hoarding creates unnecessary pressure on the supply chain. Instead of fuel reaching consumers smoothly, it gets trapped in warehouses or private storage. The result is visible chaos at gas stations and distribution centres. Another worrying aspect of the current situation is the role of irresponsible political statements. During times of crisis, public communication becomes extremely important. Citizens look to political leaders for guidance and reassurance. Unfortunately, when some opposition political leaders make statements suggesting that the country may face severe fuel shortages, it creates fear among the public. These statements often spread rapidly through social media, causing confusion and panic. Political debate is an essential part of democracy, and

opposition parties have every right to question government policies. However, there is a difference between constructive criticism and spreading fear. In sensitive situations like an international war affecting energy supply, irresponsible statements can worsen the situation. Instead of helping citizens remain calm, such remarks may encourage panic buying and hoarding. Ultimately, it is the common people who suffer from long queues, uncertainty, and rising prices.

At such a critical moment, it is important for all political parties to act responsibly. The war in West Asia was not started by India, and its consequences are global. Many advanced economies are also struggling with rising energy prices and supply concerns. Instead of turning the issue into domestic political conflict, leaders should work together to maintain public confidence and national stability.

The government has repeatedly clarified that India currently has sufficient stock of petroleum products and LPG. Strategic reserves, diversified imports, and coordinated logistics ensure that supplies continue to reach consumers. Authorities have urged citizens not to panic and not to purchase more fuel than required. Panic buying does not help anyone; it only creates temporary shortages and disrupts distribution systems.

In fact, India has made significant progress in strengthening its energy security over the past decade. Strategic petroleum reserves have been created to store crude oil for emergency situations. These reserves act as a safety buffer in times of international crisis. Additionally, India has expanded refinery capacity and improved logistics networks to distribute fuel across the country more efficiently.

Another long-term solution lies in reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels. India has already started investing heavily in renewable energy sources such as solar power, wind energy, and green hydrogen. Such initiatives will gradually reduce dependence on imported crude oil and make the economy more resilient to

global shocks. However, in the immediate situation, public cooperation is equally important. Citizens should trust official information and avoid spreading rumours. Hoarding fuel or LPG cylinders only harms other consumers who genuinely need them. Responsible behaviour by consumers, distributors, and political leaders can help maintain stability during difficult times.

The media also has an important role to play. Accurate reporting, fact-based analysis, and responsible communication can prevent panic and misinformation. Sensational headlines and exaggerated claims about shortages can create unnecessary fear among the public. Balanced reporting helps people understand the real situation and encourages calm decision-making.

History shows that countries overcome crises through unity and discipline. Whether it was the oil shocks of the 1970s or more recent global disruptions, nations that maintained public confidence and political stability were able to manage challenges effectively. India has the institutional strength, economic resilience, and diplomatic relationships needed to navigate the current energy uncertainties.

In conclusion, the ongoing conflict involving Iran, Israel, and the United States has undoubtedly created pressure on global energy markets. Rising oil prices and supply uncertainties may slightly affect economic growth in many countries, including India. However, the situation is manageable if handled with responsibility and cooperation. The government is already taking steps to secure energy supplies through diplomatic engagement and diversified imports, including increased purchases from Russia. What is needed now is calm, responsible political discourse, and public cooperation. Rumours, speculation, and hoarding will only worsen the situation. At a time when the world is facing uncertainty, national unity and trust in institutions are the most powerful tools to ensure stability and economic resilience.

The Unseen Risks of Smartphone Addiction

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Smartphones have undoubtedly enhanced our lives, but excessive usage can be detrimental. Often, excessive use is a symptom of underlying issues in a person's life. The effects of excessive smart-

phone use are key indicators of smartphone addiction, along with an obsession with physical appearance.

Given the risks, it's time to consider making it compulsory for smartphone sellers to warn customers about their potentially addictive properties. Parents need to be

Powering Resilience: India's Long-Term Energy Strategy

Operation Epic Fury has had an impact of epic proportions on world energy prices, sending crude oil prices skyrocketing to \$120 per barrel just a few days ago. Since then, prices have remained volatile, keeping the entire energy market on edge. At the centre of global concern lies the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most critical chokepoint, through which nearly one-fifth of global crude oil passes. The Strait of Hormuz matters significantly for India's energy supplies, but things currently look manageable. Over the last 11 years, India has actively diversified the sources of its energy imports. India has also worked to change the mix of its energy sources, strongly pushing domestically generated renewable energy.

Imagine if this crisis had hit India a decade ago. With almost all our oil and gas coming from the same volatile region and no real alternatives in place, the impact would have been devastating. Petrol and diesel prices would have shot up overnight crippling transport and pushing inflation through the roof. India has relative remain insulated to the churn caused by the crisis. In comparison, other countries are struggling significantly. Japan, already burdened by record-high public debt, has become one of the most vulnerable economies. The gas-reliant UK has seen immediate price spikes leading to renewed inflation. Nations like Egypt and Turkey are confronting fresh inflationary pressures. Singapore is dealing with sharp increases in electricity and petrol costs, while South Korea has resorted to imposing a fuel price cap for the first time in nearly three decades to stabilize its economy amid the oil surge.

The current crisis therefore offers an important reminder: India's relative resilience today is not accidental. It is the result of deliberate policy choices made over the past decade under Prime Minister Narendra Modi to diversify energy sources and strengthen domestic capacity.

In today's interconnected world, no country can be fully self-sufficient in energy. Even advanced economies rely on global supply chains for fuel, technology and critical minerals. The real challenge is not eliminating dependence altogether, but ensuring that a single disruption does not cripple the entire system.

Over the past decade, India has steadily moved in that direction. Through a strategy of multi-alignment diplomacy, the country has expanded its crude sourcing network from 27 countries to over 40, reducing reliance on any single supplier or region. In the event of supply disruptions in one part of the world, this broader network provides India with greater flexibility to adjust. Thus not putting all eggs in

the same basket has helped us sail through. At the same time, India has accelerated the expansion of its domestic energy capacity. The country's total installed electricity capacity has more than doubled in past 11 years and now crossed 520 GW, with more than half coming from non-fossil fuel sources including renewable energy, hydro and nuclear power. Without this rapid expansion of clean energy, India would today be far more dependent on imported fuels to meet rising electricity demand.

One of the other most visible examples of this shift is the PM Surya Har Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, which aims to install rooftop solar panels in one crore households. This has enabled families to generate their own electricity, promoted decentralised energy production and reduces pressure on conventional power sources.

Beyond lowering household electricity bills, the programme carries significant long-term economic and environmental benefits. The initiative is expected to save the government nearly Rs 75,000 crore annually in electricity costs, highlighting how clean energy expansion can simultaneously strengthen fiscal efficiency and sustainability. Without such decentralised solar expansion, rising electricity demand would have placed greater pressure on fossil-fuel-based power generation, increasing fuel imports and making India far more vulnerable to global energy disruptions like those unfolding today.

Such initiatives have also begun to influence household energy behaviour. As rooftop solar expands and electricity becomes cheaper, families may increasingly rely on electric appliances for cooking and other daily needs. Over time, this shift could reduce India's dependence on imported LPG as well. Alongside renewable electricity generation, India is also transforming its mobility sector through EV. This shift is strategically important because the transport sector accounts for a significant share of India's oil consumption, meaning that electrifying mobility can gradually reduce long-term crude oil demand. Reflecting this transition, India's EV sector has expanded rapidly from just 2,600 electric vehicles in 2014 to 16.71 lakh EV sales in 2025, signalling the growing adoption of clean mobility.

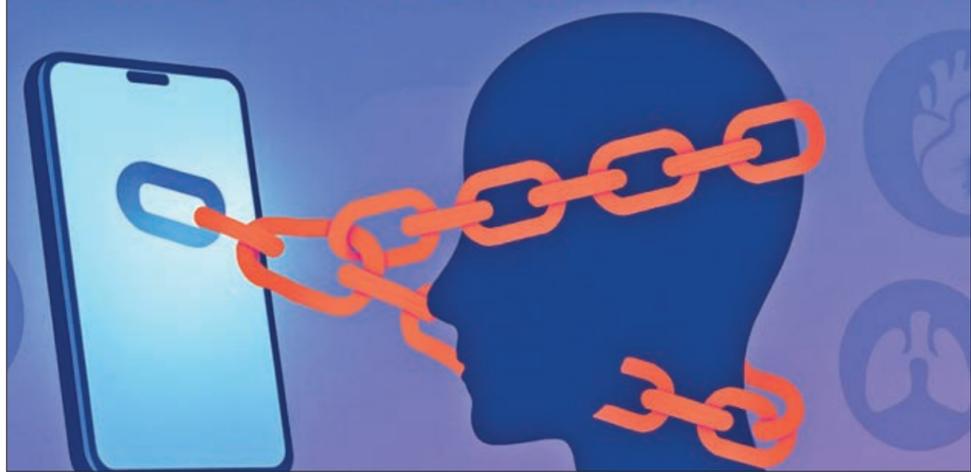
Government policies have played a crucial role in this transition. The FAME-I scheme (2015) supported around 2.78 lakh EVs, saving nearly 50 million litres of fuel.

As EV adoption grows, its impact goes beyond cleaner transport. Over time, greater electric mobility will reduce India's dependence on imported oil, making the country less vulnerable to global disruptions like those currently unfolding in the Middle East. If the rapid expansion

of electric vehicles had not taken place over the past decade, India would have been at tight spot. India would be even more dependent on petrol and diesel for transportation, exposing the economy to sharper fuel price spikes and a much larger import bill at a time when global energy markets are already under severe stress. The integration of renewable energy with electric mobility creates a powerful multiplier effect. Electric vehicles already have significantly lower operating costs than petrol or diesel vehicles. When EVs are charged using solar power generated at home, transportation becomes not only cleaner but also significantly cheaper.

The broader impact is both economic and strategic. Lower fuel imports not only improve air quality and mobility but also shield the economy from external oil shocks like those currently unfolding in global energy markets. India has also strengthened its Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) capacity over the past decade to prepare for supply disruptions during geopolitical crises. Under PM Modi, India expanded its emergency oil storage infrastructure with strategic reserves at Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru, and Padur, while initiating additional facilities at Chandikhol and Padur Phase-II. As a result, India today has oil reserves that can sustain the country for around 74 days when strategic reserves are combined with commercial inventories. A decade ago, however, India's emergency crude reserves could cover barely 13 days of demand, leaving the economy far more exposed to sudden import shocks. The expansion of strategic reserves has therefore placed India in a significantly stronger position to manage supply disruptions and price volatility during crises like the one currently unfolding in global energy markets.

In a world where geopolitical tensions can disrupt global energy supply chains overnight, true resilience is not something built during a crisis. It must be forged years in advance through foresight, strategic planning, and decisive action. India's decade-long push for energy diversification under PM Modi, including diversifying import sources and routes, building strong long-term global partnerships, making massive investments in domestic infrastructure, and accelerating the shift to renewables, is now clearly proving its value. As the Hormuz crisis reveals vulnerabilities across the globe, India's preparations have significantly softened the impact compared to many other nations. This moment underscores why proactive self-reliance in energy is more critical than ever. In an unpredictable world, such forward-thinking strategies remain the strongest defence against sudden economic shocks.

SCREEN ADDICTION
UNSEEN CHAINS ON MOOD,
HORMONES, AND HUMAN HEALTH

phone use are raising concerns among health and educational authorities due to its negative impact on children and adolescents. Today, parents of teens know that technology brings special challenges. For some parents, the rapid changes in technology may be a bit overwhelming. The majority of teens, 95%, have access to a smartphone, and these devices have seemingly limitless ways to connect, including messaging apps, internet connectivity, social media, and games.

Smartphones are enormously useful, but sometimes their allure can be too strong. We feel compelled to respond to them, even if it means ignoring the people we're with. They disrupt our sleep, and we feel anxious or lost without them. For some users, life without a mobile phone is unimaginable. The consequences of smartphone addiction are alarming. Excessive use can lead to isolation, loneliness, decreased interpersonal relationships, and social interactions. Pediatricians and healthcare professionals should be aware of these risks and work with parents to recognize early signs of addiction. Another concern is adult content. Most youth encounter internet pornography or play video games with adult content during their childhood. It's essential to speak with children about this issue and educate them on responsible smartphone use. Research suggests that smartphones can be addictive, and the more you use them, the worse it gets. Moodiness, loneliness, and jeal-

empowered to help teens manage smartphone use, and governments should launch awareness drives to educate the public on smartphone addiction symptoms. Additionally, setting boundaries and limits on smartphone use is crucial for maintaining a healthy balance. Encouraging offline activities, such as sports, reading, or socializing, can help reduce smartphone dependence. Monitoring app usage and setting parental controls can also help mitigate the risks associated with smartphone addiction.

Furthermore, smartphone addiction can have severe consequences on mental health, including anxiety, depression, and stress. Excessive use can also impact physical health, leading to sleep deprivation, eye strain, and sedentary behavior. It's essential to recognize the signs of smartphone addiction and take steps to address it. This includes seeking professional help, joining support groups, or simply having open conversations with family and friends about smartphone use.

Ultimately, smartphones are tools designed to make our lives easier, but it's up to us to use them responsibly. By being aware of the risks and taking proactive steps, we can ensure that smartphones remain a tool, rather than a tyrant, in our lives. By striking a balance between technology and real-life interactions, we can harness the benefits of smartphones while minimizing their negative impact.