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Briefs, scans the best academic platforms, national newspapers, and leading think tanks to pick the most relevant articles and research. It converts them into crisp, high-impact points you can directly use in your Mains answers.



TODAY'S ARTICLES (fill in)

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| 1 | Sinking of Dena opens new front in the war - | Indian Express |
| 2 | War is waged as spectacle - | Indian Express |
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Sinking of Dena opens new front in the war, disrupts hard-won regional peace



ARUN PRAKASH

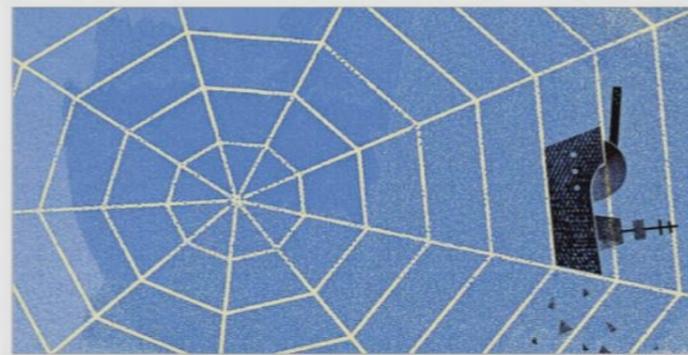


ILLUSTRATION: C R SAKSHUMAR

THE TORPEDOING of the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena, 40 miles off the coast of Galle, Sri Lanka, in the early hours of March 4, offered India a blinding flash of harsh reality: The conflict we thought was 3,000 km away in the Persian Gulf had arrived at our doorstep.

By releasing periscope-camera footage of a submarine-launched torpedo detonating under the stern of the ill-fated Dena, the Pentagon provided a cold-blooded demonstration of the US Navy's reach. The sinking of an Iranian warship home-bound from the Indian Navy's Visakhapatnam base, where it had been a guest for the International Fleet Review (IFR), must have been a profound shock to its hosts.

The destruction of the Dena by a single Mark 48 torpedo — described by US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth as a "quiet death" — signals that Washington is no longer content to contain the US-Israel-Iran conflict within the Persian Gulf. By striking near Sri Lanka, Washington has declared that there are no "safe" waters for its adversaries. The message is clear: The capability to strike is, in itself, the only logic that matters in the era of "Operation Epic Fury".

The uncanny sequence of recent events witnessed across the world, from Eastern Europe and the Middle East to Venezuela, and now the Persian Gulf, should serve as a stark reminder that the hallowed principles of "state sovereignty" and "non-interference", that lay at the heart of the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, and were enshrined in the 1945 UN Charter, have become little more than relics.

Far more apposite to our fraught present situation is the ancient verdict of the Athenian strategist Thucydides: "The

strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must." In this grim 2026 replay, the "strong", embodied by a Virginia-class nuclear attack submarine — possibly the most powerful weapons platform afloat — has dispatched a "weak" Iranian frigate that naively presumed that international waters would grant it impunity.

Much of the indignation in India is fixated on the personal affront rendered: The Iranian vessel and its 180 sailors were recently guests of the Indian Navy. Yet the harsh truth is that once the vessel departed India's territorial waters, we owed her no sovereign protection. With Iran and the US locked in open conflict, any warship flying a belligerent's flag becomes, by the inexorable logic of war, a legitimate target.

However, there are more cogent reasons why sinking the Dena in such proximity to the Indian peninsula was an ill-considered and needlessly escalatory action. While the conflict had largely remained confined to land or localised littoral zones, this kin-

etic action off Galle — a focal point of East-West shipping — has opened a new, global dimension to the war.

The shipping world, already spooked by the threatened blockage of the Strait of Hormuz, is reeling. War-risk premiums have surged by up to 80 per cent, with some insurers cancelling coverage entirely in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. Combined with the rerouting of ships via the Cape of Good Hope, freight rates are spiking. The ultimate cost will be borne by the poor common citizen in developing nations.

Decades after the concept of an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace was buried, these waters have become the focus of international maritime cooperation. Through initiatives like SAGAR, India has fostered a stable transit corridor for the world's energy and trade. This is the lens through which New Delhi views the sinking of the Dena: A gratuitous disruption of a hard-won regional peace and tranquility, by a friend, a "strategic partner" as well as a "major defence partner".

The US rationale for dramatic

ally shifting the theatre of war to the South Asian maritime domain is, perhaps, rooted in its 2026 doctrine of Deterrence by Denial. By targeting a ship returning from a high-profile diplomatic and military mission in India, the US may be signalling three objectives: (a) neutralising Iran's naval reach in the eastern Indian Ocean; (b) demonstrating to Beijing that the US maintains total escalation dominance over critical sea lines of communication; and (c) signalling to regional powers that the era of comfortable maritime neutrality is ending as the Indian Ocean becomes a primary zone of kinetic enforcement.

Secretary Hegseth's claim that this was the first torpedo sinking of an enemy ship since WWII is historically inaccurate. A notable post-WWII precedent is the 1982 sinking of the General Belgrano by a Royal Navy nuclear submarine during the Falklands War. While that strike was a strategic gain, it became a long-term diplomatic embarrassment for London. The Belgrano was sunk outside the "Exclusion Zone" established by the UK, leading to accusations of "state piracy" and "unnecessary escalation" that haunted Margaret Thatcher's government for years.

Finally, note needs to be taken of US Secretary Hegseth's public rhetoric, which marks a radical departure from traditional US military-diplomatic restraint. His open advocacy of unrestricted violence ("raining death and destruction all day long" on Iran), his disdain for international institutions, and "rules of engagement" are disquieting to say the least.

Such shrill rhetoric can have unforeseen and unintended consequences, particularly when two of the three primary belligerents are nuclear-armed. Fortunately, New Delhi maintains friendly, functional ties with all parties. It is now the urgent task of Indian diplomacy and statesmanship to persuade these actors to impose limits on this conflict before the "logic of war" consumes the global commons and inflicts irreparable harm on mankind.

The writer is a former Indian Navy chief

Apposite to our fraught present situation is the ancient verdict of the Athenian strategist Thucydides: "The strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must"

Facts

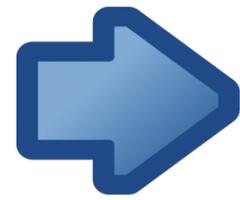
Context A west Asia war spillover hits India's backyard: the sinking of Iran's IRIS Dena near Sri Lanka signals sea-domain escalation, jolts shipping insurance/routes and makes de-escalation urgent for New Delhi.

Theoretical lens + Verbatim Quotes

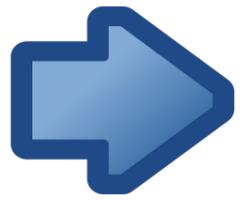
- Thucydides - "The strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must."
- Deterrence by Denial - "Rooted in its 2026 doctrine."

- IRIS Dena, 40 miles off the coast of Galle, Sri Lanka in the early hours of March 4.
- The 1982 sinking of the General Belgrano, outside the 'Exclusion Zone' during the Falklands war.

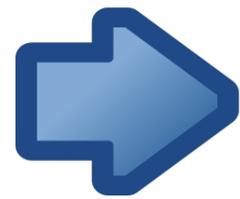
Analytical Crux



A new global dimension to the war in the Indian Ocean: "no safe waters + primary zone of kinetic enforcement."



War-risk premiums... up to 80% insurers "cancelling coverage"; rerouting via Cape of Good Hope: ultimate cost borne by the poor common citizen in developing nations.



Friendly, functional ties with all parties + push 'limits on this conflict' before the 'logic of war'... consumes the global commons and inflicts irreparable harm on mankind.



War is waged as spectacle. We have devised new strategies of moral evasion

WHEN US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth spoke of causing "death and destruction from the sky all day long" in Iran, it was not simply an aggressive summons to havoc or an apocalyptic prophecy. Intentionally or not, it was a reminder of the utter global moral void of this moment.

All wars are terrible. But this Israel-US-Iran war, perhaps more than most, seems to have been unleashed with the sole objective of perpetuating its own fury. This war exists to achieve no aim. It is not a war to conquer or liberate. Even granting it the purpose of weakening Iran is granting it too much dignity. Its real aim is simply the continuation of its own violence. The war is about performance: An expression of power rather than an instrument for rational purposes. If it has a purpose, it is only this: To test the next generation of technology — missiles, AI, targeting systems, cyber warfare.

That is why the questions we are asking about this war miss the point. Did we learn the lessons of Iraq? Was there a plan for the day after? Why does the stated objective keep shifting: Is it denuclearisation, regime change, or the break-up of Iran? What can air power alone achieve? Did you anticipate that Iran would climb the escalatory ladder and try to impose severe economic costs on its neighbours?

These questions presume that the war has coherent purposes. But the modus operandi of the Trump administration has been the nihilistic display of power and

spectacle, shifting from one theatre to another. It will break every international law imaginable and flout hard-won precedents: Assassinating heads of state, sinking defenceless ships returning from goodwill missions without warning. The list will go on. The response will simply be the nihilist's version of that immortal line: "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."

The overweening nihilism of American and Israeli military power — we will strike anywhere and anytime with impunity — has met its counterpart in the nihilism of desperation embodied by the Iranian regime. The US and Iran have, to put it mildly, a complicated history. Iran became vulnerable in the way countries often do when they become the object of excessive American attention. It responded by cultivating proxies, pursuing a nuclear programme, and presenting itself as an ideological vanguard. The regime was politically odious. But it also converted its defensiveness and insecurity into a nihilism of its own. In retrospect, what is striking about Iran's strategy of survival is that it, too, failed to calibrate ends and means. After Hamas's brutal attack on Israel, Iran turned out to be a power with all bark and little bite; for all its sound and fury, a country with a simulacrum of defence. Iran, it appears, was the perfect target, not because it posed an imminent threat, but because it was incapable of posing much of one at all. Its performative bluff had long been called out. The wars of



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

power that the US wished to wage did not need a reason. They only needed a pretext. Iran simply provided it. Iran has now responded, in a final act of desperation, by trying to raise the costs of war by drawing the rest of the world into the conflict. It has embraced the desperate version of "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."

And then there is the rest of the world, with its own paralytic version of the same refrain. The moral stunting of the current crop of world leaders is astonishing. Watching Keir Starmer, Emmanuel Macron, and Friedrich Merz exude confusion about their stand on the war is like watching children trip over themselves because their shoelaces have been tied together. The Gulf monarchies are hardly better. Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia and Mohammed bin Zayed in the UAE, after years of senseless proxy wars from Sudan to Yemen, have left their regimes ideologically hollow. Their mixture of ingratiation themselves with the West, while clamping down on their own civil societies since the Arab Spring, has produced leaders who no longer know what they stand for.

The modus operandi of the Trump administration has been the nihilistic display of power, from one theatre to another. It will break every international law imaginable and flout hard-won precedents

Prime Minister Narendra Modi does no better. This war has revealed the degree to which India has become a supplicant to American demands. If one believes that Modi's embrace of Netanyahu or India's tongue-tied silence has anything to do with protecting the Indian diaspora in the Gulf, one is simply in denial

about the vacuous reorientation of India's foreign policy. China, meanwhile, appears paralysed. Part of this may be quiet satisfaction at watching the US inflict another wound upon itself. But more likely, it reflects a deeper limitation: For all its power in a bilateral contest with the US, China still cannot lead an international coalition for peace, or against atrocity. The easiest adaptive preference becomes the same refrain: "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."

In the US, there is resistance within the Democratic Party. But it takes the easy refuge of procedural virtue, and debates over Congress's war powers. Perhaps the young have been chastened by the repressive powers of the state we saw deployed against protests last year. We have all devised new strategies of moral evasion.

The real obscenity of this moment is not simply the war itself; it is the normalisation of a world in which war has become performance. But if the great powers have chosen nihilism, the rest of the world still has a choice. The task now is not to take sides in this theatre of destruction, but to refuse the premise that the will to violence must dictate the terms of politics. What is required is states willing to say that aimless wars waged as spectacle, fought to test technologies, will not be legitimised by silence. Or else the chorus of this dying civilisation will be: "Frankly, my dear, we did not give a damn."

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express

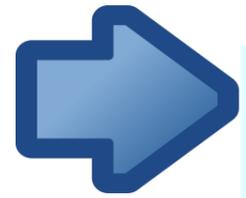
Context A critique of the Iran war as 'spectacle' - a performance of US-Israeli power & moral evasion with India's response framed as 'paralysed' and 'suppliant'.

Facts

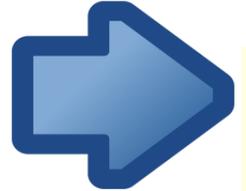
- Pete Hegseth spoke of causing "death and destruction from the sky all day long" in Iran.

- After Hamas's brutal attack on Israel, Iran turned out to be a power with all bark and little bite.

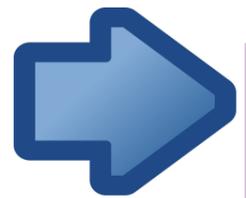
Analytical Crux



The war is about performance : An expression of power rather than an instrument for rational purposes.



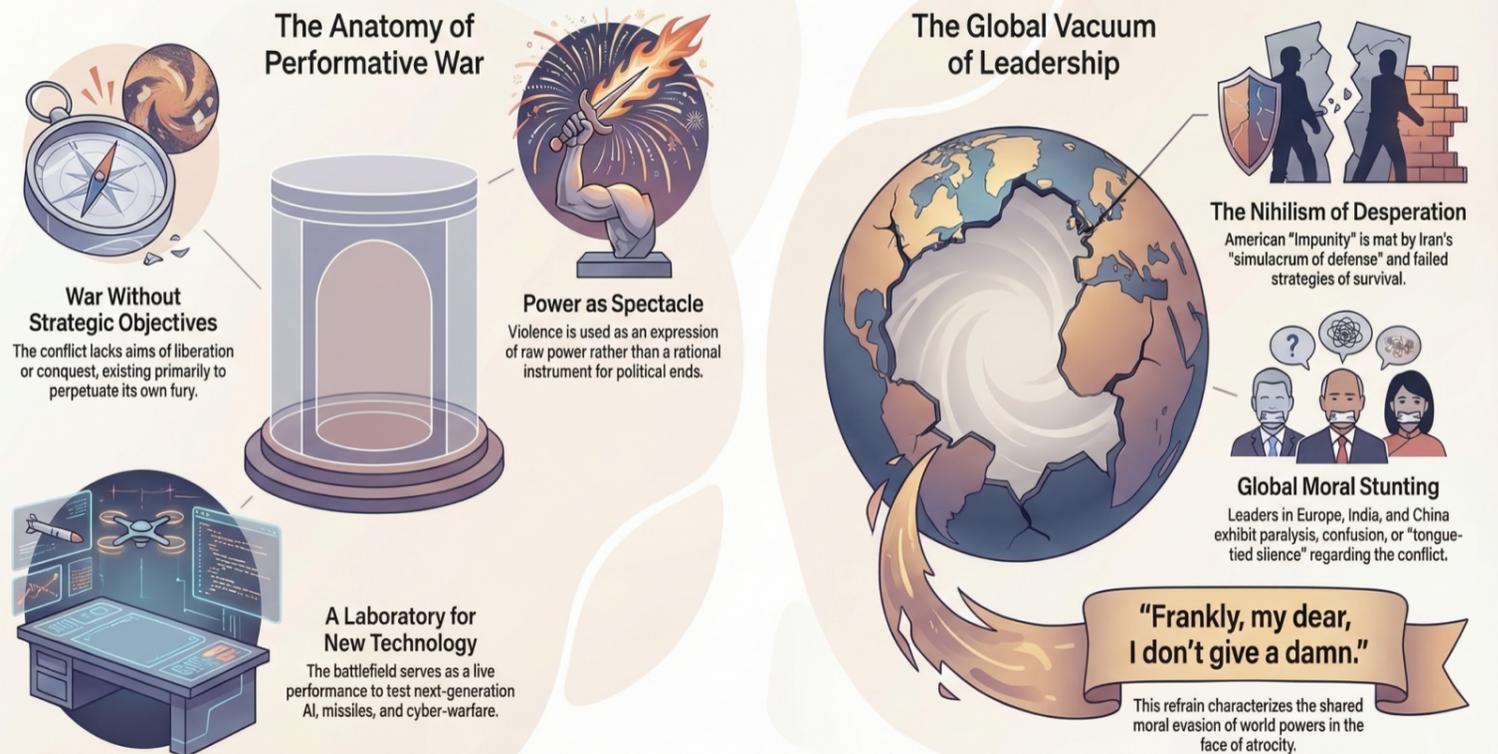
The overweening nihilism of American and Israeli military power meets the nihilism of desperation embodied by the Iranian regime.



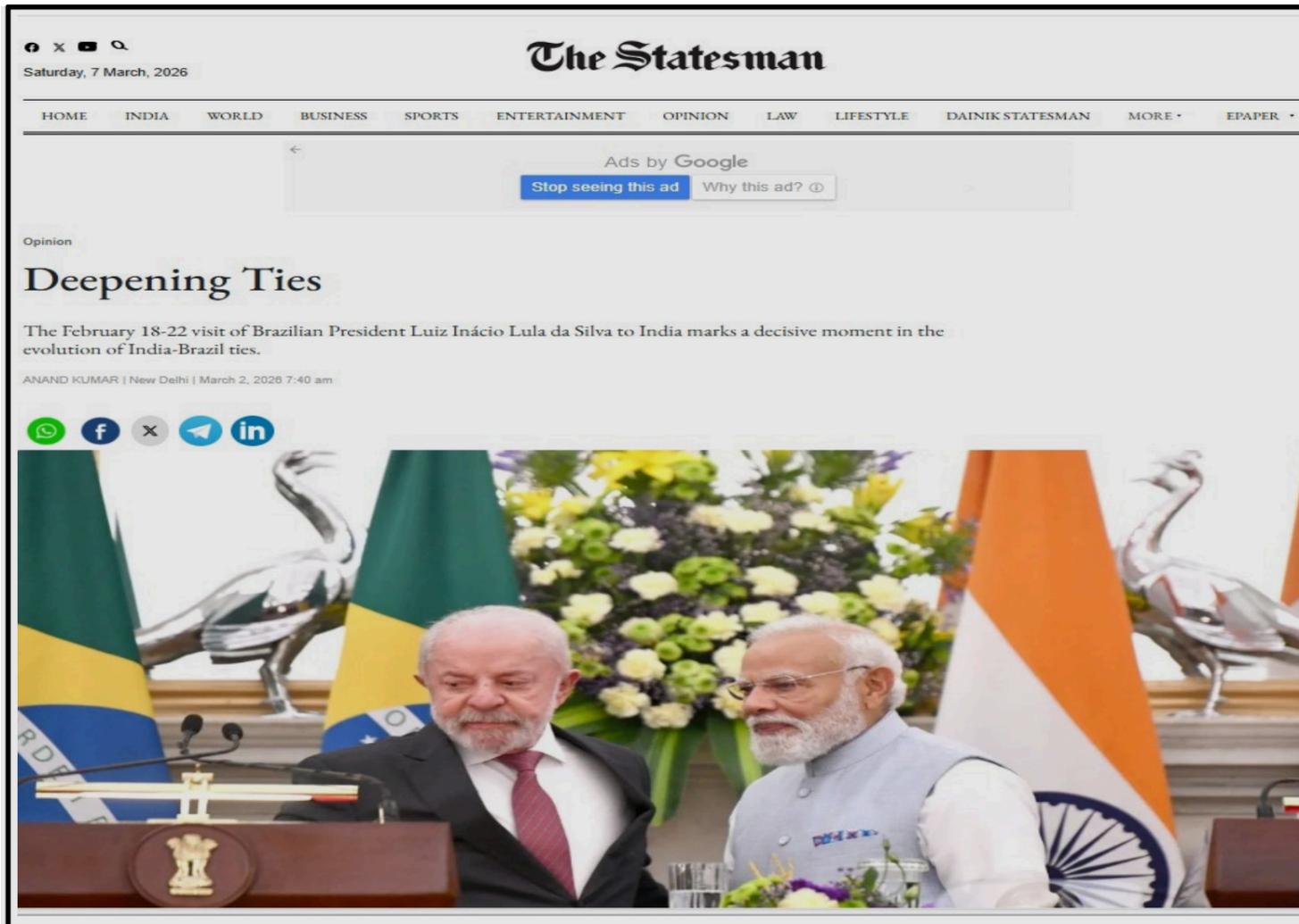
what is required is states willing to say that aimless wars waged as spectacle, fought to test technologies, will not be legitimised by silence.

The Nihilism of Performative War: A Global Moral Vacuum

A shift to war as a spectacle, characterized by aimless violence, technological testing, and global moral indifference.



Article - 3



Context India and Brazil are upgrading ties from symbolism to a structured, multi-sector partnership - trade, critical minerals, digital tech, defence, health climate - shaped by protectionism, supply-chain shocks & great power rivalry.

Facts

- The February 18-22 visit of Brazilian President to India.
- Upgrading 2006 strategic partnership into a comprehensive, multi-sectoral alignment.
- Ambitious bilateral trade target of \$30 billion by 2030.
- Bilateral trade, crossed \$15 billion in 2025.

Analytical Crux

➔ Trade as resilience : \$30 billion by 2030, reduce non-tariff barriers, expand India-MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement, and build 'economic resilience' beyond 'traditional western Markets'.

➔ Supply chains + tech : critical minerals, rare earth supplies and a Digital Partnership for the Future (AI, DPI, cybersecurity, data governance) as "geoeconomic" and "Fourth Industrial Revolution" cooperation.

➔ Strategic autonomy, Global South agency: defence industrial cooperation (Scorpene-class submarines), local currencies in bilateral trade, UNSC reform push and a "third space assertively pro-Global South."

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The program focuses on Comprehensive coverage of the topic mentioned in PSIR Syllabus supplemented with regular handouts.
Upcoming Batch: 6th July, 2026

OGP (OPTIONAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM)

Focus will be on conceptual clarity and building the ability of the candidates to interlink the static portion with current developments.
Upcoming Batch: 9th June, 2026

PSIR DYNAMICS

The program focuses on Current-Relevant dedicated classes covering national and international developments, integrated with PSIR syllabus.
Upcoming Batch: 22nd June, 2026

ATS (AUGMENTED TEST SERIES)

ATS sharpens structure, presentation, and depth converting effort into higher score.
Upcoming Batch: 26th April, 2026

O-AWFG (ANSWER WRITING FOCUS GROUP)

The answer writing program creates discipline and enhances skills. It helps students develop structure, articulation, coherence, and approach.
Upcoming Batch: 20th April, 2026

O-AWFG PRIME

The test series program enhances speed, flow and dynamic understanding of the subject.
Upcoming Batch : 20th April, 2026

PYQ Mastery Series

The series focuses on PYQ practice anchored in conceptual clarity and contemporary relevance.
Upcoming Batch: 22 June, 2026

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