

Houthi attack and trade in Red sea

- Liberian flagged merchant vessel Chem Pluto heading to Mangalore port was hit by a projectile about 271 miles from Porbandar in Gujarat, just outside the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- This comes in the backdrop of a sharp rise in missile and drone attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea by Houthi rebels in Yemen in the last couple of weeks following Israel's offensive against Hamas in Gaza.

Alternative shipping route avoiding Red Sea

— Using Red Sea/Suez Canal	— Around Cape of Good Hope
10,000 nautical miles (18,520km)	13,500 nautical miles (25,002km)
25.5 days*	34 days*

*Based on ultra large container vessel's average speed of 16.48 knots



How do these events impact India and the world?

- Threats to shipping in the Gulf of Aden and the region are not new as seen with episodes of Somalian

pirates and the global anti-piracy efforts by several countries.

- However, the recent events represent a serious escalation that can potentially disrupt supply chains and impact economics. The Red Sea is a key shipping artery for global commerce and the Bab el Mandeb is a critical choke point.
- Following the October 7 terror attacks on Israel by Hamas and the subsequent offensive by Israeli Defence Forces, the Houthi rebels have declared they would target all maritime commerce linked to Israel

- “About 12% of global trade passes through the Red Sea, which accounts for billions of dollars of goods and about 30% of the world's container shipping.
- Access to the Red Sea requires passage through the Bab el Mandeb a narrow strait about 20 miles wide with Djibouti to the west and Yemen to the east,”



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- Following the attacks, several global shipping majors have announced their decision to avoid the route and take a longer route through the Southern Indian Ocean adding to both fuel and operating costs in addition to the time.
- For instance, shipping industry giant Maersk had begun re-routing vessels around Africa via the Cape of Good Hope.
- The avoidance of the Red Sea route has substantial implications, potentially adding one to two weeks to voyages, disrupting shipping schedules, and subsequently elevating fuel and insurance costs,”
- From the Indian side, both the Navy and Coast Guard have increased their presence and surveillance in the region.
- Since October 2008, the Indian Navy has continuously deployed at least one ship on antipiracy patrol in the Gulf of Aden and since 2017 under Mission Based Deployments has deployed one capital warship each at all the critical maritime choke points into the IOR.
- Indian Navy’s Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) located in Gurugram is actively monitoring the region and coordination in the back end to facilitate communication where required, like between the Navy and the company when m. v. Ruen was hijacked recently in the Gulf of Aden.

What is being done to address this?

- To counter the attacks and protect the free flow of commerce in the Red Sea, on December 18, U.S. Secretary of Defence Lloyd J. Austin announced the establishment of Operation Prosperity Guardian (OPS), an “important new multinational security initiative under the umbrella of the Combined Maritime Forces and the leadership of its Task Force 153, which focuses on security in the Red Sea.”
- Since the announcement of OPS, several companies in the last few days announced their decisions to review the re-routing.

In real time

The Navy’s Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) in Gurugram is the single-point centre linking all coastal radar chain networks along the 7,500-km Indian coastline and in some neighbouring countries

- The IFC tracks and monitors 75,000 - 1.5 lakh shipping vessels in real time round-the-clock



- The IFC actively interacts with the maritime community and has already built linkages with 18 countries and 15 multinational and maritime security centres

- The major centres with which regular exchange of maritime security information is being undertaken include Virtual Regional Maritime Traffic Centre, Maritime Security Centre- Horn of Africa, Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery, Information Fusion Centre-Singapore, and International Maritime Bureau-Piracy Reporting Centre

Variant vs strain

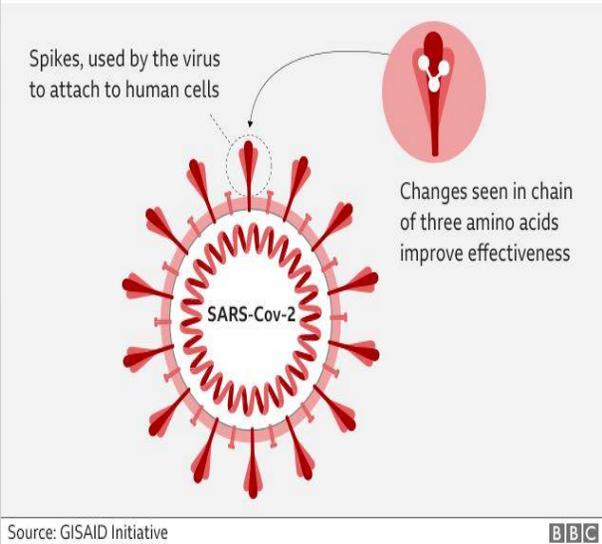
What causes the coronavirus to mutate, and how is its spike protein involved?

The spike (S) protein is one of the key biological characteristics of SarsCoV-2.

This protein allows the virus to penetrate into the cells of its host (human beings) and cause the infection.

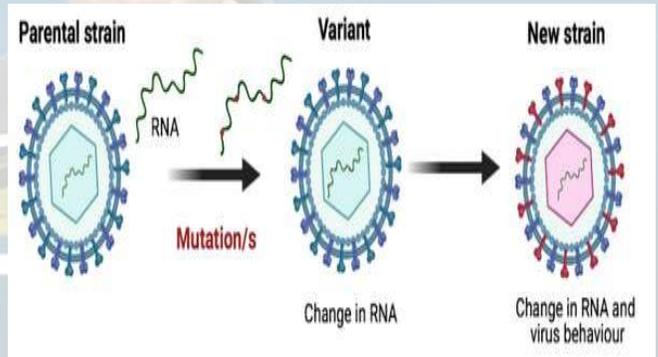
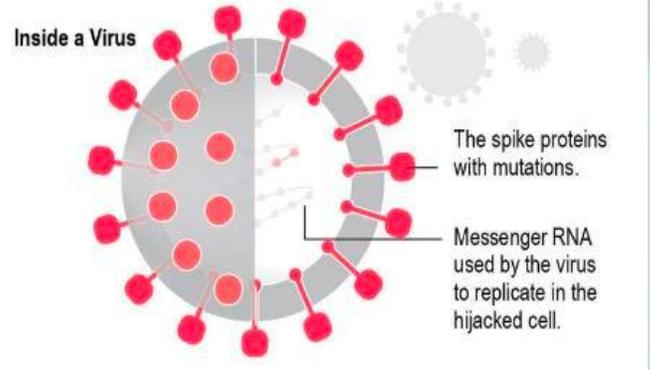
This means that without the S protein, the virus would not be able to infect human beings, and so, this is a protein that is of interest to scientists making vaccines and anti-viral drugs

One coronavirus mutation has become dominant



The new coronavirus variant

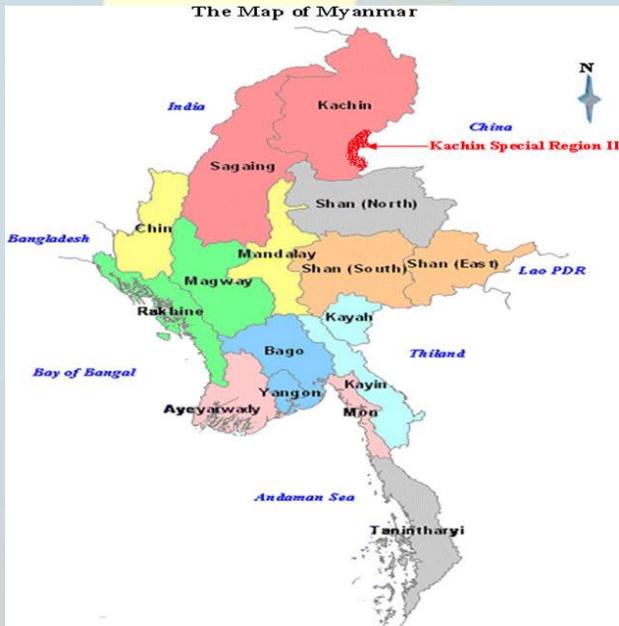
The new variant of the virus that causes COVID-19 has several mutations on its spike proteins. These spikes are used by the virus to attach to and infect cells. They also are what vaccines and antibody drugs target.



The Hindu

Leave District on Myanmar border





The most popular donkey route is through Latin American countries like Ecuador, Bolivia or Venezuela which provide visas on arrival for Indian citizens,”

Gujarat and Punjab account for the highest number of illegal migrants to the US, reason for this was not clear but the huge Indian diaspora in Canada could be a factor.

“The donkey route is full of uncertainties and even the agents who arrange the travel only take responsibility till the migrants reach the borders,

THE EXTORTION	
FOR GUATEMALA	FOR U.S.
₹6 TO ₹12 LAKH	₹25 TO ₹30 LAKH

THE VARIOUS KINDS OF JOBS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS USED TO TAKE UP IN THE U.S.

- CAR WASHING
- WINDOW CLEANING
- SALESPERSON IN SHOPS
- WORKING AT FARMS AT PETROL PUMPS
- AS PLUMBERS

The Hindu

Illegal migration and donkey –route

- Agents who facilitate the migration take Indians through the “donkey route”, which involves moving from one country to another till migrants reach either Canada or Mexico, after which they cross the US border on foot.

The Hindu