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- The Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on Africa's Nuclear Energy Landscape.
- Introduction to PAC's Critique of GST
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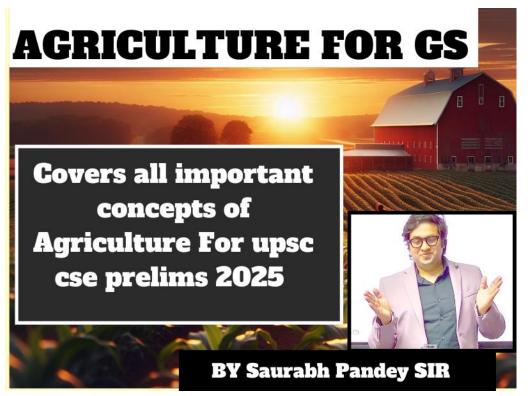
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Advantage China in Africa's nuclear energy market race



he Russia-Ukraine war has demonstrated the importance of energy security, where many European countries were caught scrambling and developing new energy partnerships. The devastating impact of the war did not spare Africa too despite the geographical distance. As African leaders are reworking the energy basket of their countries, nuclear energy is emerging as the driver of this energy transformation.

Currently, Africa has only one nuclear plant, at Koeberg in South Africa, built by a French consortium. However, other African countries, which includes Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, Rwanda, Kenya and Zambia, are projecting the use of nuclear energy to enhance electricity access for their citizens.

According to some estimates, Africa is expected to generate 15,000 MW of nuclear energy by 2035. Africa's nuclear energy market is poised for significant growth, representing an investment opportunity of \$105 billion. Unsurprisingly, many countries want a slice of this strategic market.

The scramble for Africa's nuclear market

So far, France has dominated Africa's nuclear market. However, it is rapidly losing its influence and struggling to maintain its relevance, particularly in Francophone Africa. Meanwhile, since 2023, the United States has been organising the US-Africa Nuclear Energy Summit (USANES). However, it will depend on U.S. President Donald Trump on whether and how he wants to proceed with the U.S.'s nuclear expansion plan in Africa.

Russia, another important player in Africa's nuclear market, has inked several agreements with Egypt, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Burundi. Since July 2022, Russia's Rosatom has been building a reactor in El Dabaa, Egypt, though progress is slow. With Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power (KHNP) at the helm, South Korea has also shown its interest in capturing this untapped market. However, the country that is



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With a number of African countries reworking their energy basket, Beijing could emerge as the partner country of choice undoubtedly winning the race for the nuclear market is China.

Explaining China's dominance

China's nuclear ambition in Africa is a relatively new phenomenon. In 2012, in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the China Atomic Energy Authority began a scholarship programme for students from African and South Asian countries wishing to develop national nuclear programmes. It served, among other things, to provide training in Chinese procedures and equipment to increase the chances of African countries purchasing them. Today, China has more than 50 operating reactors. Undoubtedly, China has emerged as an attractive partner for African countries interested in developing nuclear energy.

China's nuclear expansion in Africa is being spearheaded by two large state-owned companies – the China General Nuclear Power Group (CGN) and the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC).

In 2024, during the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing, Nigeria signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with China that includes the design, construction, operation, upgrading, maintenance and decommissioning of nuclear power stations in Nigeria. The visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Nigeria in early 2025 further cemented this collaboration.

At the same summit, Uganda also signed an MoU with China to build a 2 GW nuclear plant. The first unit, of 1 GW, is expected to be connected to the grid by 2031. Kenya also plans to have a research reactor in operation by 2030. While Kenya is still open on its choice of partner country, Ghana has selected the U.S.-based NuScale Power and Regnum Technology Group to build its Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), while China National Nuclear Corporation is set to build a Large Reactor (LR).

In West Africa, the junta leaders of Burkina

Faso, Niger and Mali are all leading pro-Russian governments, and signed an MoU with Russia on the sidelines of the Russia-Africa Summit 2023. Although they have approached the Russian nuclear behemoth, Rosatom, to build their nuclear capacity, the massive investment required to make a nuclear power plant and Russia's own economic stagnation due to the Ukraine war and associated sanctions may deter Russia from investing on such a large scale in far-away Africa. This would again most likely push these countries, desperate for foreign investment, toward China.

Africa's nuclear ambition, impact on India

As the global drive toward cleaner and more efficient energy accelerates, Africa will increasingly consider nuclear energy as a panacea to the problem. Therefore, regardless of China and the debt trap risk, African countries would look to Chinese financing to support them in their nuclear journey. Today, China is already leading the race in constructing new nuclear power plants across the world.

Further, very few African countries possess the transmission networks required to receive and distribute power from these nuclear plants. China can also help build these transmission networks under the framework of its schemes such as the "Belt and Road Initiative". If China manages to do that, this will not only enhance its position as a leader in Africa's clean energy market but also entrench its overall dominance in Africa.

As of January 30, 2025, India's nuclear generation capacity is 8,180 MW. As India aims to generate 100GW of nuclear energy by 2047, it would be important for India to secure African uranium. In 2009, India signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with Namibia. India also plans to develop some uranium mining projects in Niger and Namibia. Yet, with increasing Chinese dominance, it would be harder for India to venture in Africa's nuclear market, impacting India's energy security in the long run.

The Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on Africa's Nuclear Energy Landscape.



Energy Security in a Changing World

The Russia-Ukraine war has dramatically shifted the global energy paradigm. European nations have been scrambling to secure alternative energy sources, and this turmoil has rippled through the African continent, prompting a critical reassessment of energy strategies.

Energy Vulnerability: With the war exposing vulnerabilities in energy supply, African nations are increasingly aware of their dependencies.

Nuclear as an Answer: Nuclear energy is being reconsidered as a stable and secure source of power, supplementing the continent's diverse energy portfolio.



Africa stands at a crossroads where energy security is no longer a luxury but a necessity. Nuclear energy could be the beacon of hope for sustainable development. **.

The Current State of Nuclear Energy in Africa

Africa's Sole Nuclear Plant: Koeberg

Currently, Africa boasts a singular nuclear power facility, the Koeberg plant in South Africa, which serves as a critical pillar for the continent's nuclear ambitions.

Koeberg Overview: Established by a French consortium, Koeberg has been operational since the 1980s and generates approximately 1,800 MW.

Potential for Expansion: Despite its lone status, the plant symbolizes the vast potential for nuclear energy across Africa.



Future Projections for Nuclear Energy in Africa

The tides are shifting as nations like Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, Rwanda, Kenya, and Zambia eye nuclear energy as a means to bolster electricity access.

Projected Growth: Estimates suggest that by 2035, Africa could generate an astonishing 15,000 MW of nuclear energy.

Investment Opportunities: This transition represents a staggering investment opportunity of \$105 billion, making it a focal point for international investors.

The future of nuclear energy in Africa is bright, with nations eager to harness its potential for economic growth and energy independence. •

The Scramble for Africa's Nuclear Market



France's Declining Influence

Historically, France has dominated Africa's nuclear market, but its influence is waning.

Shift in Partnerships: African nations are actively seeking new alliances, reducing reliance on French technology.

The Role of the United States

The U.S. has initiated the US-Africa Nuclear Energy Summit (USANES) to foster collaboration and investment in nuclear energy.

Political Factors: The future of U.S. involvement hinges on domestic political decisions, particularly concerning energy policy.

Russia's Involvement



Russia has signed agreements with several African nations, including Egypt and Mali, though progress has been slow.

Challenges in Development: The construction of new reactors has faced significant delays, particularly with Rosatom's project in El Dabaa, Egypt.

South Korea's Interest

South Korea, through Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power (KHNP), is looking to capitalize on Africa's nuclear potential.

Competition with China: However, the real winner in this race appears to be China, which is rapidly solidifying its position.

The Implications for India



India's Nuclear Aspirations

As Africa embraces nuclear energy, India, aiming to generate 100 GW of nuclear energy by 2047, must secure access to African uranium.

Agreements with Africa: India has already signed agreements with Namibia and is exploring mining projects in Niger.

Challenges from Chinese Dominance

The increasing Chinese presence in Africa's nuclear market poses significant challenges for India.

Navigating Competition: As China strengthens its foothold, India may find it increasingly difficult to secure its energy needs.

India's energy security could be compromised if it fails to adapt to the rapidly changing landscape of Africa's nuclear sector.



The Future of Nuclear Energy in Africa

The Russia-Ukraine war has catalyzed a reevaluation of energy strategies across the globe, with Africa poised to embrace nuclear energy as a key component of its energy future.

Evolving Dynamics: As nations vie for influence in this emerging market, the dynamics of power and partnerships will continue to evolve.

Leadership in Nuclear Revolution: The question remains: who will ultimately lead Africa's nuclear revolution?

Equitable distribution

PAC recommendations on GST reforms
will resonate with States
he 19th report of Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is appropriately

scathing in its criticism of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, introduced in July



2017 to simplify, unify and improve indirect tax compliance in India. At the outset, the PAC highlights a nearly 2% drop in indirect tax revenue between FY18 and FY20 - the first two years of GST prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the several discrepancies flagged, it is the non-auditing and non-finalisation of the States' Compensation Fund for over six years that stands out as particularly troubling. This has strained the functioning of what was meant to be a unified yet federal tax structure. The PAC notes the Centre's failure to furnish the Compensation Fund Account to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), a necessary step to certify and release timely compensation to States for revenue losses since the rollout of GST. The centralising tendencies of the GST regime have long been a point of contention for major revenue-generating States, many of which have raised concerns over diminished fiscal autonomy and sharp declines in indirect tax collections. As a destination-based tax, GST is levied at the point of consumption, adversely affecting manufacturing-heavy States. To address these concerns, the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017, mandated a Compen-

sation Fund and promised States a 14% annual revenue growth for five years (2017-22), using FY16 as the base year. However, many States have reported either non-receipt of funds or serious delays, which they say have negatively impacted governance. The PAC attributes this to the Centre's indifferent approach. In one striking example, the PAC cites 2,447 inconsistencies – amounting to ₹32,577.73 crore - out of a sample of 10,667 cases – and criticises the Finance Ministry's audit approach as "lackadaisical". The PAC has recommended establishing a formal mechanism with the CAG to ensure timely audits and updates on pending cases. It also calls for a comprehensive review to develop a "GST 2.0" - a recommendation that is likely to resonate with States demanding a greater share of GST revenues, closer to 70%-80%, up from the current 50%.

Introduction to PAC's Critique of GST



- The Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) recently released its 19th report, unleashing a barrage of criticism aimed squarely at the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, introduced in July 2017.
- Designed to simplify and unify indirect tax compliance in India, the PAC's findings reveal a stark reality that suggests the system is faltering.

Key Findings: Declining Revenue and Compensation Fund Issues



The PAC's findings paint a grim picture for the GST landscape:

Revenue Decline: A documented 2% decrease in indirect tax revenue in the initial two years post-GST implementation.

Compensation Fund Complications: The Compensation Fund, crucial for providing financial relief to states experiencing revenue losses, has not been duly finalised. The PAC emphasizes that the Centre has failed to present the Compensation Fund Account to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), crucial for certifying and releasing timely compensation.

Discrepancies Galore: Out of 10,667 cases sampled, the PAC identified 2,447 inconsistencies amounting to a staggering ₹32,577.73 crore. The Finance Ministry's audit approach has been labelled as "lackadaisical," indicating a profound need for reform in oversight processes

Impact on States: Fiscal Autonomy at Risk



The centralising tendencies of the GST regime have raised alarms among revenue-generating states, which have expressed legitimate concerns over:

Diminished Fiscal Autonomy: Many states feel their financial independence is eroding, largely due to the GST framework's structure.

Negative Revenue Impacts: States reliant on manufacturing are particularly hard-hit; the destination-based taxation system has diverted revenue from these areas, leading to sharp declines in collections.

Governance Challenges: The delays and inconsistencies in the Compensation Fund have hampered state governance, leaving them struggling to manage their finances effectively.

The Way Forward: Recommendations from the PAC



In light of the alarming findings, the PAC has put forth several recommendations to rejuvenate the GST framework:

Formal Mechanism with CAG: Establishing a structured partnership with the CAG to ensure timely audits and updates on pending cases, thus enhancing accountability.

Proposal for "GST 2.0": The PAC calls for a comprehensive review and the development of a "GST 2.0"—a revamped version that could potentially address the grievances of states seeking a more equitable distribution of GST revenues, ideally aiming for a share of 70%–80%, as opposed to the current 50%.



Bangladesh welcomes China to participate in Teesta project

Kallol Bhattacherjee

NEW DELHI

Bangladesh on Friday welcomed Chinese participation in the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project. Bangladesh's assurance was communicated during the ongoing visit of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus to China. The two sides also signed an agreement on exchange of hydrological information of the Yarlung Zangbo-Jamuna (Brahmaputra) River. In a joint statement issued after the end of the official discussion, the two sides announced that Bangladesh and China have agreed to

start discussion for a Free Trade Agreement "at an early date".

"The two sides agreed to promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, strengthen international cooperation on industrial and supply chains and work together to achieve modernisation in both countries," the Joint Statement said. They also extended support to the "core issues" relevant to both sides, and Bangladesh reiterated its support for the "one China policy".

Apart from addressing the Boao Forum annual meeting in Hainan, Mr. Yunus also met President Xi Jinping in Beijing. Mr. Yunus met a group of Chinese traders and investors for a high-level round table at the Presidential Hotel in Beijing on Friday.

"Bangladesh reiterated its firm commitment to the One-China principle and its position that China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory," the Joint Statement stated. Bangladesh expressed appreciation to China for creating convenient conditions for the treatment of medical tourists from Bangladesh in the Yunnan province.

"China consistently adheres to the principle of



Muhammad Yunus

non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, respects Bangladesh's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, supports Bangladesh in safeguarding its national independence, respects the development path independently chosen by the people of Bangladesh, and supports Bangladesh in exploring a development path suited to its own national conditions," said the Joint Statement. Bangladesh has assured China that together they will advocate an "equal and orderly multipolar world".

The two sides have also assured that they will start negotiations on optimising the China-Bangladesh Investment Agreement. The Joint Statement informed that Bangladesh has welcomed Chinese companies to participate in the Mongla Port Facilities Modernisation and Expansion Project. That apart, the two

sides stand ready to cooperate in "further" developing the Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone in Chittagong.

The year 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relation between Bangladesh and China and the two sides resolved to deepen exchanges on this occasion on "culture, tourism, media, education, health care and vouth." They also agreed to deepen cooperation in blue economy and announced that they will hold a new round of Dialogue on Maritime Cooperation "at an appropriate time.

Topic → China in the Teesta river project



- Bangladesh has welcomed Chinese involvement in the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project.
- The assurance of cooperation was made during Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus's visit to China.
- An agreement was signed for the exchange of hydrological information regarding the Yarlung Zangbo-Jamuna (Brahmaputra) River.
- [A joint statement was released following official discussions between the two nations.
- Bangladesh and China have agreed to initiate discussions for a Free Trade Agreement soon.
- The collaboration highlights the strengthening ties between Bangladesh and China in water management and trade.







Massive quake kills at least 144 in Myanmar and 8 in Thailand; junta seeks foreign help





Agence France-Presse NAYPYIDAW

A huge earthquake hit Myanmar and Thailand on Friday, killing more than 150 people and injuring hundreds, with dozens trapped in collapsed buildings and the death toll expected to rise.

The shallow 7.7-magnitude tremor hit northwest of the city of Sagaing in central Myanmar in the early afternoon, and was followed minutes later by a 6.4-magnitude aftershock.

The quake flattened buildings, downed bridges, and cracked roads across swathes of Myanmar, and even demolished a 30-storev skyscraper under construction hundreds of kilometres away in Bangkok.

While the full extent of the catastrophe is yet to emerge, the leader of isolated Myanmar, in the grip of a civil war, issued a rare plea for international aid.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing said 144 people had been killed, with 732 confirmed injured, but warned the toll was "likely to rise". Eight deaths have been confirmed so far in Thailand, with more

He urged massive relief efforts in the wake of the disaster and said he had "opened all ways for fo-

Four years of civil war sparked by the military seizing power have ravaged Myanmar's infrastructure and healthcare system, leaving it illequipped to respond to

The country declared a state of emergency across the six worst-affected regions after the quake, which the World Health Organization described as a "very, very big threat to life and health".

'Mass casualty area'

Hundreds of casualties arrived at a major hospital in Naypyidaw, where the emergency department entrance had collapsed on

An official at the hospital, the same one visited by the junta chief, described it as a "mass casualty area" with medics treating the wounded outside.

"I haven't seen [something] like this before. We are trying to handle the situation," a doctor said.

Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest city, appeared to have been badly

A resident reached by phone said the city was badly lacking in rescue personnel.

Across the border in Thailand, a 30-storey skyscraper under construction collapsed to a tangled heap of rubble and dust in a matter of seconds.

Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said eight dead bodies have been recovered and, with between 90 and 110 people unaccounted for, the toll is expected to rise.

"We see several dead bodies under the rubble. We will take time to bring the bodies out to avoid any further collapses," he told presspersons.

As night fell, around 100 rescue workers assembled at the scene to search for survivors, illuminated by specially

floodlights. Visiting the site, Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said "every building" in Bangkok would need to be inspected for safety, though it was not immediately clear how that would be carried out.

An emergency zone was declared in Bangkok, where metro and light rail services were suspended.

Strong quakes are ex-

tremely rare in Thailand. India, France and the European Union all offered to provide assistance, while the WHO said it was mobilising its logistics hub in Dubai to prepare trauma injury supplies.

Why Earthquake in Myanmar??



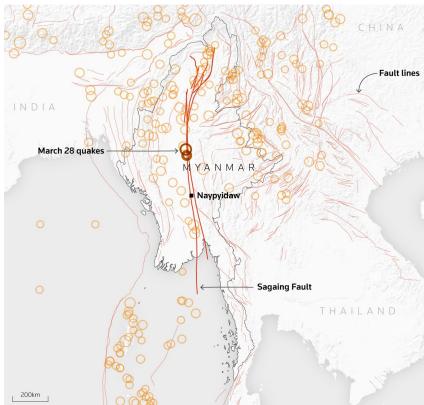
- The Earth is made up of three parts: a molten, mostly metallic core at the centre, surrounded by a hot, nearly solid layer of rock called the mantle, with a jigsaw-like crust on the outside that is made up of constantly shifting tectonic plates.
- This movement of the plates on the slippery mantle, at different speeds and in different directions, causes energy to build up.
- The release of this energy causes the intense shaking of the planet's surface that we call an earthquake. When the energy is released below the ocean, it creates a series of huge waves known as a tsunami.

Myanmar rattled by magnitude 7.7 earthquake

The Sagaing fault line runs through or close to major cities including Yangon, Naypyidaw and Mandalay.

Magnitude 6+ earthquakes since 1900





Sudev Kiyada • March 28, 2025 | REUTERS

Source: USGS

What lies beneath the surface in Myanmar?

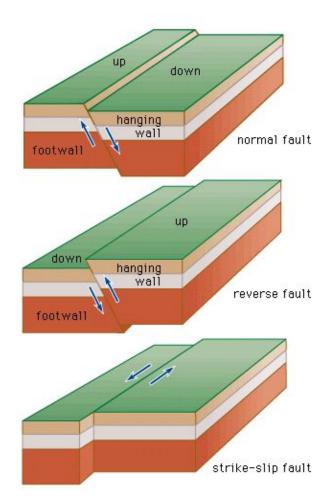


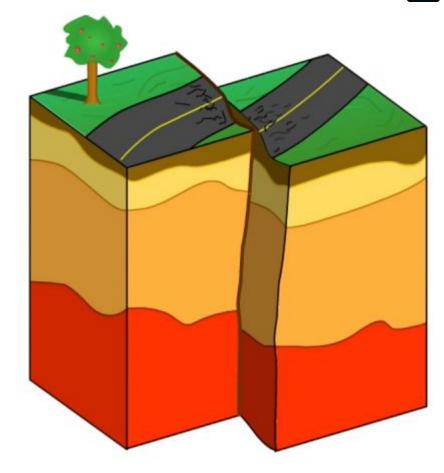
Myanmar's location between two tectonic plates – the India and Eurasia plates – places it at particular risk of earthquakes.

The boundary between the two plates is called the Saigang Fault. Experts describe it as a long, straight line running approximately 1,200km (745 miles) from north to south through cities such as Mandalay and Yangon, placing millions of people at risk.

According to the USGS, the Myanmar earthquake occurred because the India and Eurasia plates were rubbing sideways against each other, a motion described as "strike-slip faulting".







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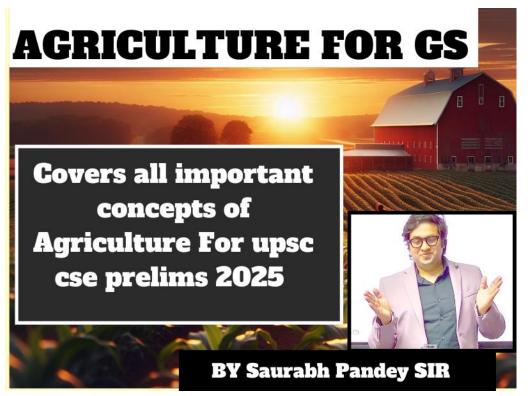
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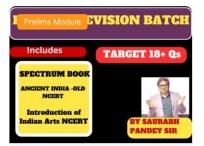
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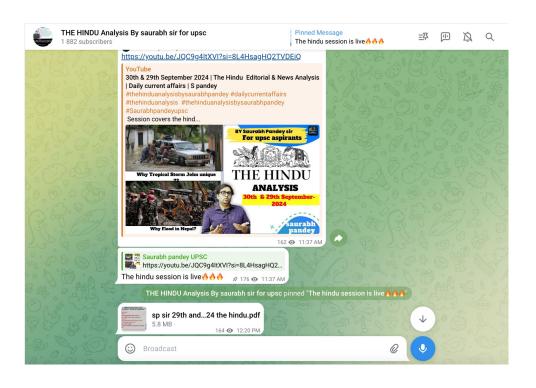


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