

Commercial LPG, jet fuel rates up amid Iran crisis

Major metro cities hit with a price hike of more than 10% for commercial cylinders; price of aviation turbine fuel up 9% for domestic travel; no change in prices for household LPG cylinders

Saptaparno Ghosh
Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

State-run oil marketing firms hiked the price of commercial liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders by more than 10% in major metro cities on Wednesday, while the price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) was more than doubled for international air travel and chartered flights.

On the other hand, travellers flying within the country faced a smaller ATF rate increase of around 9%.

The Centre defended the hikes, noting that its oil marketing companies (OMCs) are bearing the brunt of the spike in global oil prices.

There has been a 44%

Fuels on fire

According to the government, the LPG hike has been necessitated by a 44% spike in benchmark Saudi Contract prices as 20-30% of global LPG remain stranded in the conflict-hit Strait of Hormuz

Commercial LPG prices hiked by **₹196-218** per cylinder across the country

Aviation fuel prices more than doubled for international flights; up **8.6%** for domestic

IndiGo increases fuel surcharges up to **₹950** for domestic and to **₹10,000** for international flights

Under-recoveries of oil marketing companies projected to cross **₹40,484 crore** by May-end

Commercial LPG consumption less than **10%** of total LPG consumption in India, says Centre

spike in benchmark Saudi Contract prices between March and April, as 20% to 30% of global LPG is stranded in the Strait of Hormuz amid the ongoing U.S.-Iran war in West Asia.

The Indian Oil Corporation set the new price of a 19 kg commercial cylinder

in Delhi at ₹2,078.5, a hike of ₹195.5 from the ₹1,883 price set on March 7.

Similarly, Mumbai woke up to a ₹196 hike on each commercial cylinder, while a ₹203 price increase was seen in Chennai, and ₹218 hike in Kolkata. The effect of the hike is expect-

Tehran denies Trump's claim of seeking ceasefire

CHENNAI

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that Iran asked for a ceasefire and he would consider it once the Strait of Hormuz is open. Iran said it has not made any such proposal and will continue the war "until the aggressor is punished and compensation is paid". » **PAGE 14**

ed to be felt across the country. There has been no change to the prices of LPG cylinders meant for household use.

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INDIGO RAISES LEVY

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Commercial LPG, jet fuel rates increased

For domestic flights, the price of ATF in Delhi was increased by about 8.6% to ₹1,04,927 per kilolitre (Kl), with a similar 8.6% in Mumbai.

For international flights by Indian airlines as well as chartered flights, the price was more than doubled to a record ₹2.07 lakh per kilolitre.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas defended the hike in ATF prices, saying that it has passed on only a partial increase in the prices to the airlines.

“In order to insulate the domestic travel costs from the substantial increase in international prices, PSU Oil Marketing Companies of the Ministry of Petroleum, in consultation with Ministry of Civil Aviation, have passed only a partial and staggered increase of 25% (only ₹15/litre) to the airlines,” the Ministry said in a post on social media.

The Ministry noted that OMCs are bearing an average loss of ₹380 on the sale of every LPG cylinder, given current rates. “Cumulative losses by end-May will reach approximately ₹40,484 crore,” the Ministry said in a social media post.

Public-sector OMCs are also incurring losses of about ₹24.4 for every litre of petrol and ₹104.99 for every litre of diesel sold, as of today, the Ministry added.

IndiGo responded to the hike by revising its fuel surcharges. Domestic surcharges have been rationalised, and now range between ₹275 and ₹950 per flight, depending on the distance being flown, effectively reducing the burden on shorter routes.

International fuel charges have seen a much steeper increase. Previously ranging from ₹900 to ₹2,300 per sector depending on region, the revised charges now go up to as high as ₹10,000 for long-haul routes such as India-Europe, reflecting the sharp rise in ATF prices for international operations. The ATF rate for scheduled domestic carriers has been increased by ₹21 per litre, whilst those for non-scheduled and international airlines are up more than ₹110 per litre, Ministry joint secretary Sujata Sharma told journalists. She clarified that these are retail prices, not the base prices of the fuel.

Though the government referred to a “staggered increase” in ATF rates, Ms. Sharma could not offer any clarity on the timing of the next such hike. “When will it happen next, I cannot say now,” she said.

Commercial LPG rates, on the other hand, are deregulated, market-determined, and revised monthly. “Their consumption is less than 10% of the total LPG consumed in the country,” the Petroleum Ministry said.

Exclusion from electoral rolls doesn't repeal voting rights forever, says Supreme Court

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

The rights of West Bengal voters purged from the electoral rolls during the special intensive revision (SIR), and unable to make it to any of the supplementary lists ahead of the Assembly election, cannot be “washed away forever”, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant made the observation in the context of 19 tribunals constituted by the Election Commission of India (EC) to hear appeals of persons excluded from the electoral roll.

Justice Joymalya Bagchi, on the Bench, said the adjudication and appellate processes of the SIR exercise must be taken to its logical conclusion, and anything less would lead to



The SIR exercise must be taken to its logical conclusion, and anything less would lead to an extremely oppressive situation

**JUSTICE
JOYMALYA
BAGCHI**

Supreme Court
judge



an “extremely oppressive” situation.

The Bench also highlighted a Calcutta High Court communication saying nearly 47 lakh of a total 60 lakh claims under adjudication had already been disposed of and the remaining would be cleared by April 7.

The appellate hearings would ensure justice for those excluded incorrectly, CJI Kant said.

The Bench directed that

the poll body should provide the tribunals complete access to the reasons and remarks recorded by adjudicating officers on why “logical discrepancy was justified and deletion of a person from the electoral roll was warranted”.

The appellate tribunals, notified by the EC on March 20, are presided over by former Chief Justices and judges of High Courts. Chief Justice Kant said the appellate hearings before seasoned judges in the tribunals would ensure that justice would be done to those excluded incorrectly.

The final date for filing nominations for the first phase of elections, which will see 152 of the total 294 Assembly constituencies go to poll, was April 6.

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MANY OUT OF ROLLS

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Exclusion doesn't repeal voting rights forever: SC

The hearing on Wednesday commenced with the Bench reading out a communication from the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court that judicial officers, deployed as Election Registration Officers and Assistant Election Registration Officers (EROs/AEROs) for the SIR exercise, had already disposed of nearly 47 lakh of a total 60 lakh claims under adjudication.

The Bench conveyed the High Court Chief Justice's assurance that the remaining claims would be disposed of by April 7.

"If somebody has a right [to vote] we cannot thwart, if somebody does not have a right to vote, we can stop the person. It is as simple as that," senior advocate Dama Seshadhiri Naidu, for the EC, submitted.

Senior advocate Shyam Divan, for the State government, submitted that out of the approximately over 40 lakh claims disposed of, there was a "very high exclusion rate" of 45%. "And these are all mapped individuals," Mr. Divan said.

The court listed the case on April 6.

Lok Sabha passes Bill, recognises Amaravati as sole capital of A.P.

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed a Bill to recognise Amaravati as the sole and permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh, with the principal Opposition party Congress extending support to the legislation while the YSR Congress walked out in protest.

The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026 was passed by voice vote after a nearly two-hour debate.

Once enacted, it will give statutory backing to Amaravati as the State's capital with effect from June 2, 2024, effectively foreclosing any future attempt to alter the decision.

Replying to the debate, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai thanked members for supporting the resolution adopted by the Andhra Pradesh Assembly seeking legal recognition for Amaravati as the capital.

'Special category status' Initiating the discussion, Congress member Maniackam Tagore said his party supported the Bill but reiterated the demand for special category status for the State. "Let Amaravati develop like Bengaluru, Chennai or Hyderabad. At the same time, cities such as Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, and Kurnool must also grow," he said.



The Minister of State for Home, Nityanand Rai, thanked Lok Sabha members for supporting the resolution. PTI

During his tenure as Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had proposed a three-capital model for the State – administrative capital at Visakhapatnam, legislative capital at Amaravati, and judicial capital at Kurnool.

After returning to power in 2024, CM N. Chandrababu Naidu reversed the plan and reiterated Amaravati as the State's sole capital.

Participating in the debate, TDP member and Union Minister of State Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani urged the House to pass the Bill unanimously, saying it would end uncertainty over the State's capital.

Centre puts off FCRA Bill as protests erupt in Lok Sabha

Amendment Bill is not aimed at any religion but at curbing misuse of foreign contributions, says Kiren Rijiju, counters narrative that it could target minority institutions that receive foreign funds

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Amid strong protests from Opposition benches, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday informed the Lok Sabha that the government did not intend to bring a Bill to amend the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) in the ongoing Budget Session.

Mr. Rijiju accused the Opposition of misleading people in Kerala and across the country ahead of the Assembly election in the State. "I had told the Congress yesterday [Tuesday] that since the Bill has been introduced, it has been listed for consideration and passage for Wednesday. But today [Wednesday], the FCRA (amendment) Bill is not being taken up for discussion," he said.

Protests erupted in the House as soon as the Question Hour began at 11 a.m., with Opposition members, mainly from Kerala, raising slogans against the provisions of the FCRA (Amendment) Bill.



On the defensive: Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju speaks in the Rajya Sabha in New Delhi on Wednesday. SANSAD TV

Mr. Rijiju said the Bill, introduced last month, seeks to protect national security and interest and asserted that it is not aimed at any religion or organisation. It is intended to prevent misuse of foreign contributions, he said.

"Since there are elections in Kerala, the Congress and the Communists are spreading wrong things about the Bill," he said.

As Opposition members trooped into the Well of the House, Speaker Om Birla adjourned the proceedings till 12 noon. Even before the House met, Opposition members protested outside the main en-

trance of Parliament.

It is not only the Opposition protests but also pressure from the Kerala unit of the BJP that seems to have forced the government to rethink pushing the FCRA (Amendment) Bill in the Budget session.

Key proposal

One of the key proposals of the Bill is to establish a "Designated Authority" to manage and dispose of foreign funds and assets of NGOs whose registration is suspended, cancelled, or not renewed. In poll-bound Kerala, a narrative has emerged that these provisions can be misused

to crack down on minority institutions such as churches, which may receive foreign funds.

Such a concern could not have come up at a worse time for the BJP as the party, after it won one out of the 20 seats in Kerala in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, has been reaching out to the Christian community in the State to build a dedicated vote base.

Senior CPI(M) leader and Rajya Sabha member John Brittas accused the Union government of blocking attempts to seek elementary information on the government's policy decisions regarding FCRA, saying routine parliamentary questions on the issue are now treated as "secret in nature".

In a detailed post on X, Mr. Brittas said that since 2024 he has submitted eight questions seeking clarity on FCRA suspensions, cancellations, non-renewals, fresh registrations, and the removal of public access to NGO-wise data from the FCRA dashboard. "Yet, none of those questions elicited any response," he wrote.

Why Bill to amend FCRA has sparked controversy



DAMINI NATH & JATIN ANAND

THE UNION government on Wednesday deferred a discussion on the contentious Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment (FCRA) Bill, 2026, which was introduced in Lok Sabha on March 25.

The Bill seeks to amend the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 which regulates the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution and foreign hospitality to "ensure that such inflows do not adversely affect national interest, public order or national security".

But several Opposition parties have alleged that the legislation would affect institutions belonging to minority communities, including Christians.

Though Wednesday's Lok Sabha agenda listed the Bill for consideration, it was not taken up for discussion. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju told reporters that the decision was based on legislative priorities and not politics.

The controversy over the Bill, however, comes just ahead of the April 9 Assembly election in Kerala, a state with a large Christian population. And indeed, the most vociferous objections have come from this state, both from the ruling Left Democratic Front and Opposition Congress.

So what's exactly in this Bill that has prompted the furor?

What is the FCRA?

The FCRA was first enacted during the Emergency in 1976 amid apprehensions that foreign powers were interfering in India's affairs by pumping money into the country through independent organisations.

The law sought to regulate foreign donations to individuals and associations so that they functioned "in a manner consistent with the values of a sovereign democratic republic".

An amended FCRA was enacted under the UPA government in 2010 to "consolidate the law" on utilisation of foreign funds, and "to prohibit" their use for "any activities detrimental to national interest".

According to the 2010 law, NGOs, similar associations and individuals have to obtain registration or permission to be able to



accept foreign contributions. Such contributions are divided under five broad heads: cultural, economic, educational, social and religious purposes.

According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill, there are approximately 16,000 associations currently registered under the Act and receive around Rs 22,000 crore annually.

The 2010 Act was amended thrice — in 2016, 2018 and 2020. The 2020 amendment gave the government tighter control and scrutiny over the receipt and utilisation of foreign funds by NGOs.

What's in the new amendment?

The key change proposed by the 2026 amendment is the creation of a "designated authority" that the Union government will have the power to appoint.

This replaces Section 15 of the existing Act. According to Statement of Objects and Reasons, while the existing section did provide for vesting of assets, "the absence of a comprehensive framework" for such assets has led to "administrative uncertainty and scope for misuse". The Statement of Objects and Reasons also cites "multiplicity of investigations, inconsistency in penalties, absence of timelines for utilisation, lack of express provision for cessation of registration, and ambiguity regarding treatment of assets during suspension".

The Bill proposes that the designated authority will take over, supervise and

manage foreign contributions and assets of an association in case their FCRA registration is cancelled, surrendered or otherwise ceases. The Bill adds that a registration certificate will be deemed to have ceased on the expiration of its validity if:

- No application for renewal was made
- Renewal has been denied
- Renewal is not obtained before expiry

Kerala controversy

The controversy over the Bill has gained traction in poll-bound Kerala, which has a large Christian population

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India says the Bill "threatens" the 'operational survival' of civil society groups that depend on foreign aid

The key change in the Bill is the creation of a 'designated authority' that will control an association's assets if its FCRA licence ceases

According to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, the FCRA Bill "threatens the operational survival of Minorities, and civil society organizations that depend on foreign contributions for essential social, educational, and charitable work."

The political debate

The Union government has said that operational and legal gaps had been identified in relation to the cases where the FCRA registration is cancelled, surrendered or otherwise ceased.

While introducing the Bill in Lok Sabha, MoS Nityamand Rai had said: "This Bill is dangerous for those who have ill intentions, those who want to carry out forcible religious conversions using foreign funding."

But Opposition parties have expressed concern that the Bill would allow the cancellation of FCRA certification in case the renewal application is not processed or rejected within the stipulated time, leading to the assets being controlled by the designated authority.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan flagged this in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, saying this had led to concerns among religious institutions.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in Kerala that the Bill would leave "charitable and other community welfare organisations" at the mercy of the Union government. Congress general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal, meanwhile, likened the Bill to the Wakf Amendment Act.

The Kerala factor

The controversy over the Bill appears to have gained significant traction in Kerala, which votes on April 9. According to the 2011 Census, which puts the state's total population upwards of 3.34 crore, Christians constitute the second-largest minority in Kerala with a population of more than 61 lakh. This makes the Christian community a key voter base in the state. Indeed, the BJP has been attempting to reach out to them for years.

During the launch of the BJP manifesto for the polls Wednesday, the party's state chief Rajeev Chandrasekhar attempted to clarify. "When we found that when there were some misgivings, some misunderstanding caused by this propaganda by Opposition parties, I strongly requested yesterday that the Bill be discussed first with the people, explained properly to the people who it will impact before the Bill is passed and the government has agreed to that," he said.

CAPF Bill passed by Rajya Sabha after Opposition walkout

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, which was passed in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, will further strengthen the security system of the country, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said, while replying to the debate on the legislation.

The Opposition walked out after Mr. Rai's speech, alleging that the government had not addressed any concerns about the Bill raised by their MPs and senior officers of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF).

Mr. Rai maintained that the Bill was an important step in resolving several inconsistencies in CAPF service rules, cadre management, and appointment-related issues, among others, to boost the efficiency and morale of the forces.

"The Bill aims to create an umbrella structure for resolving several such anomalies and streamlining its structure for better coordination and implementation," Mr. Rai said, while maintaining that the Bill is

The Opposition says
government has not
addressed concerns
raised by MPs of
various parties

not against the federal structure.

Soon after Mr. Rai's speech, Opposition Leader Mallikarjun Kharge reiterated the demand that the Bill should be referred to a select committee of Parliament. He alleged that Mr. Rai had not addressed the core issues raised by the Opposition on the institutionalisation of deputation, adverse impact on morale and career progression, lack of consultation and representation, and lack of concern for judicial direction.

Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar) MP Fauzia Khan said the Bill was judicial invasion wearing the clothes of law.

"Imagine joining one of these forces as an Assistant Commandant, young, ready to serve, 16 years have passed, you have fought insurgents, you have earned your promotion, and yet you have not received it," Ms. Khan said.

Lt. Gen. Dhiraj Seth takes charge as Army Vice-Chief amid rejig

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-General Dhiraj Seth on Wednesday assumed charge as the Vice-Chief of the Army Staff after the Indian Army announced a series of top-level appointments across key operational commands.

An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, Lieutenant-General Seth was commissioned to the Armoured Corps in December 1986. Over nearly four decades, he has built an operational profile across varied terrains and conflict environments, including counter-insurgency experience.

In other key changes, Lieutenant-General V.M.B.



Lieutenant-General Dhiraj Seth

Krishnan assumed charge as the GOC-in-C, Eastern Command, taking over from Lieutenant-General R.C. Tiwari, who superannuated on March 31. Lieutenant-General Pushpendra Pal Singh, who previously served as the Vice-Chief of the Army Staff, took over as the GOC-in-C, Western Command.

U.K. can lead Hormuz opening, says Starmer, as transatlantic ties fray

A group of 35 nations would assess all diplomatic and political methods available to ensure safe passage of ships and personnel via the Strait of Hormuz, says British PM; he reiterated U.K.'s position of staying out of the U.S.-Israel war on Iran

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the U.K. was willing to play a lead role in getting the Strait of Hormuz open again as he announced a meeting of Foreign Ministers later this week to address this. Acknowledging the pressure on him from U.S. President Donald Trump, Mr. Starmer said he would not join the U.S. and Israel's war on Iran, as he backed stronger relationships between the U.K. and European countries.

"We're prepared to take a sort of leadership role in that as the United Kingdom in relation to the Strait of

Hormuz," Mr. Starmer said at a press conference on Wednesday morning.

A group of around 35 nations, Mr. Starmer said on Wednesday, would assess all diplomatic and political methods available to ensure safe passage of ships and personnel via the Strait of Hormuz and to restore the transport of commodities via that route.

Following this, the group's military planners will be convened to look into how to make the Strait safe and accessible once the fighting has stopped.

The Hindu understands the virtual meeting will take place on Thursday and include a number of



Clear stance: Keir Starmer speaks during a press conference at 10 Downing Street in London on Wednesday. AFP

European nations, as well as Japan, Australia, the UAE, and Bahrain.

On Tuesday, Mr. Trump repeatedly took issue with European allies, specifically the U.K. and France, for

not joining the war and told them to "go get your own oil" from the Strait.

The U.K. was "fully committed" to the West's military alliance, NATO, Mr. Starmer said, when ques-

tioned about Mr. Trump's threats to pull the U.S. out of the alliance. The British Prime Minister nevertheless reiterated the U.K.'s position of staying out of the U.S.-Israel war on Iran.

"This is not our war. We will not be drawn into the conflict that is not in our national interest," Mr. Starmer said. He reiterated acting in his nation's interest "whatever the pressure on me and others, whatever the noise", referring to comments from Mr. Trump.

The U.K. needed a stronger relationship with the rest of Europe on security and defence, the economy and energy emissions, Mr. Starmer said.

NASA begins fuelling rocket for first lunar trip in 50 years

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL

NASA began fuelling its moon rocket on Wednesday for humanity's first lunar trip in more than half a century, aiming for an evening lift-off with four astronauts.

Tensions were high as hydrogen fuel started flowing into the rocket hours ahead of the planned launch. Dangerous hydrogen leaks erupted during a countdown test earlier this year, forcing a lengthy flight delay.

The launch team needs to load more than 2.6 million litres into the 32-story Space Launch System rocket on the pad before the *Artemis II* crew can board.

"It is time to fly," com-



People set cameras to photograph NASA's *Artemis II* lunar flyby mission ahead of its launch at the Kennedy Space Center. REUTERS

mander Reid Wiseman said on the eve of launch via X. Favourable weather was forecast.

Three Americans and one Canadian will fly around the moon without stopping or even orbiting – then head straight back for a Pacific splashdown. They

will set a new distance record for the farthest humans have travelled from Earth as they zoom some 6,400 km beyond the moon and then hang a U-turn.

Astronauts last flew to the moon during *Apollo 17* in 1972.



SANJAY KUMAR PANDEY

ONE MONTH since the beginning of the US-Israel war on Iran, the war is entering a new phase with the Houthis of Yemen firing missiles at Israel. The Houthis, who follow the Zaydi branch of Shia Islam, are formally known as Ansar Allah — “Partisans of God”. In the 1990s, they rebelled against Yemen’s central government. After the Arab Spring in 2011, they seized a northern province and later the capital, Sanaa, which they still hold, along with most of Yemen’s Red Sea coastline. Since then, the Houthis have become a part of Iran’s “Axis of Resistance” across the region, receiving weapons and missile

With Houthis joining, war takes a new turn

technology. They have also developed the ability to assemble their own weapons inside Yemen.

Between late October 2023 and January 2025, the Houthis regularly launched missiles at Israel and attacked over 100 merchant vessels in the Red Sea in solidarity with the Palestinian people during the Gaza war, inviting Israeli air strikes. They have also been at loggerheads with the Saudi regime. The group has faced two bombing campaigns, first from the Joe Biden administration in January 2024, and then from the Donald Trump administration in March-May 2025. Trump finally struck a “deal” with them, after admitting, “You could say there’s a lot of bravery there.”

On March 2, Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) announced that the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 per cent

of the world’s oil and liquefied natural gas usually passes, was closed to shipping. It drastically slowed traffic in the Strait and sent global fuel prices soaring.

The Bab el-Mandeb Strait, one of the busiest global shipping routes, is considered an alternative to the Strait of Hormuz. But the Houthis can significantly hamper traffic through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait (Arabic for “Gate of Tears” or “Gate of Grief”). It is a vital 26-32 km-wide maritime choke point, separating Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula from Djibouti and Eritrea

The Houthis can significantly hamper traffic through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait — a vital 26-32 km-wide maritime chokepoint

in the Horn of Africa. It connects the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, and serves as a maritime artery for 10-12 per cent of global trade. It is important for dry bulk, tanker, gas, chemical and container trades from Asia to Europe via Suez.

Saudi Arabia’s Red Sea port of Yanbu, a key export terminal for crude oil and products, is also under threat from drones and missiles from the Houthis.

Earlier this year, some major container liners had already rerouted their vessels. With these two straits entirely or partially closed, ships will have to go around the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, adding between 3,000 and 6,000 nautical miles, and 14-20 days of transit time, with significantly higher costs for trade/journeys between Asia and Europe.

Despite the legacies of Vietnam and

Afghanistan, the US is said to be contemplating boots on the ground in Iran. The entry of the Houthis coincides with the deployment of thousands of extra US troops in the region, and the strong possibility of a ground invasion. Perhaps the two are linked.

Two days ago, an image, purportedly the front page of the *Tehran Times*, went viral as it invited US troops with the headline “Welcome to Hell”, adding that the “US troops who step foot on Iranian soil will leave only in a coffin”. Now, with the involvement of the Houthis in the war, the situation on the ground and for global markets will inevitably get worse.

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