

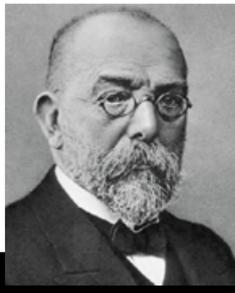
TODAY
IN
HISTORY

1882

German scientist Robert Koch discovers and describes the tubercle bacillus, which causes tuberculosis (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*), establishing germ theory

1976

Argentine President Isabel Martínez de Perón is deposed in a military coup headed by Jorge Rafael Videla



1999

NATO commences an air bombardment against Yugoslavia during the Kosovo War, the first attack by NATO on a sovereign country

2020

Indian PM Narendra Modi orders a 21-day lockdown for the country's 1.3 billion people to address COVID-19

Men gather around a destroyed Palestinian police jeep that was targeted by an Israeli air strike in Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip



Iran's defence council said in a statement that it would mine "all access routes and communications lines in the Persian Gulf and coastal areas" -- including deploying "drifting mines deployable from the coasts" if its coastlines or islands were attacked.

Iranian media **denies**

Iranian media said yesterday there were no negotiations between Tehran and Washington after US President Donald Trump announced talks towards ending the war. "There are no talks between Tehran and Washington," said Mehr news agency citing Iran's foreign ministry, adding that Trump's statements were part of a push "to reduce energy prices".

USS Gerald Ford back at Crete naval base: AFP

AFP | Soeda, Greece

The USS Gerald R. Ford, the world's largest aircraft carrier that has been part of Middle East war operations, yesterday returned to a naval base in Crete, an AFP photographer said.

The vessel, which took on food, fuel and ammunition at Souda Bay in February, reported a laundry fire on March 12 which injured two crew members.

The United States and Israel launched a massive air campaign against Iran in late February following a major US military buildup in the Middle East that included the Ford and another aircraft carrier, the Abraham Lincoln.

Both ships -- which have air wings made up of dozens of aircraft -- have played key roles in Iran operations, and the

drawal of the Ford leaves a gap for US forces in the region.

"Taking the Ford off the board for any significant length of time means less US support to war efforts," said Daniel Schneiderman, director of global policy programs at Penn Washington.

"The Ford's role in the defence of Israel is significant," he said, while noting that if some of the ships accompanying it -- which have key air defence capabilities -- remain near Israel, then "the immediate operational impact of its departure is somewhat mitigated."

The Ford has been at sea for nearly nine months -- a deployment that has already seen it take part in US operations in the Caribbean, where Washington's forces have carried out strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats, interdicted sanctioned tankers and seized Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro.

A fire broke out in a laundry

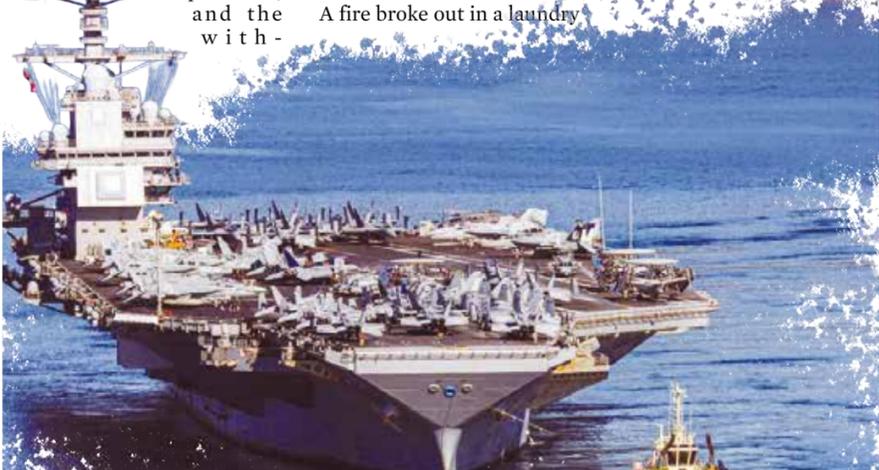
room aboard the carrier on March 12, injuring two sailors and causing major damage to some 100 beds, according to the US military.

The carrier has also reportedly suffered significant problems with its toilet system while at sea, with US media reporting clogs and long lines for restrooms on the ship.

Senator Mark Warner, the vice chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, has sharply criticised the extended deployment of the ship.

"The Ford and its crew have been pushed to the brink after nearly a year at sea, and they have been paying the price for President Donald Trump's reckless military decisions," he said.

The US Navy aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford departs Souda Bay on the island of Crete



BY INVITATION

India is against obstruction of Strait of Hormuz

H.E. MR. VINOD K JACOB



Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi addressed the situation in West Asia in a speech at the Lok Sabha or House of the People on 23 March 2026. One of the main highlights of this speech was the emphatic assertion that attacks on commercial ships and obstruction of international waterways like the Strait of Hormuz are wholly unacceptable. He stressed that large quantities of crude oil, gas, fertilizers, and other essentials reach India through the Strait of Hormuz. Unfortunately, shipping through the Strait has become highly challenging since the war began on 28 February.

It is worth recalling that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a very fruitful discussion with His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr on 20 March. Prime Minister condemned the attacks on the energy and civilian infrastructure in the region. This was having an adverse impact on global food, fuel and fertilizer security. He also reiterated the importance of ensuring freedom of navigation and keeping shipping lines open and secure.

Energy is the backbone of the modern economy. The GCC region is a major source for global energy needs, making the current crisis a challenge for economies worldwide. India's stand has been clear from the very beginning of the war. We have been expressing deep concern, advocating de-escalation, and opposing attacks on civilians and on energy and transport infrastructure. India was among the large list of co-sponsors of UN Security Council Resolution 2817 which was led by the Kingdom of Bahrain.

India has also advocated that dialogue and diplomacy remain the only path to resolution. Our efforts are to encourage all parties to reach a peaceful resolution as soon as possible.

The author is the Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain since August 2023. Views expressed are personal.)

Our efforts are to encourage all parties to reach a peaceful resolution as soon as possible.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



In this age of war our addiction to fossil fuels is destabilizing the climate, global economy & global security. Now more than ever, we must accelerate a just transition to renewable energy. Renewables deliver climate security, energy security & national security.

@antonioguterres

02



Another hospital hit. Dozens killed -- including children and health workers. This is a pattern. Medical care is protected under international humanitarian law -- yet this is being ignored. Civilians must be protected. This war must stop.

@UNReliefChief

03



Chaired a meeting of the CCS to review the mitigating measures in the wake of the ongoing conflict in West Asia. We had extensive discussions on short, medium and long term measures, including ensuring continued availability of fertilisers for farmers, diversifying import sources for key sectors, promoting exports to new destinations and more. We are committed to safeguarding our citizens from the impact of the conflict.

@narendramodi

04



Continue to follow the situation in the Middle East with dismay. Like other regions of the world, it is torn apart by war and violence. We cannot remain silent in the face of the suffering of so many defenseless victims of these conflicts. What wounds them wounds all of humanity.

@Pontifex

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stance)