

● POLITY

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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

8 FEARED DEAD, 32 INJURED IN TRAIN ACCIDENT IN A.P.

CONTEXT: At least eight passengers were killed and 32 injured when a passenger train Visakhapatnam-Rayagada passenger train (No. 08504) rammed the stationary Visakhapatnam–Palasa passenger train (No. 08532) from behind at the Kantakapalli station, 36 km from Visakhapatnam, in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday.

District Collector S. Nagalakshmi said eight persons lost their lives and 32 were injured. The injured were being shifted to hospitals in Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram. Power supply went off reportedly due to the snapping of power lines during the accident and rescue operations continued in the dark. It is feared that many more could be trapped in the mangled coaches.

INTERNAL SECURITY

BLASTS KILL TWO, INJURE 41 AT PRAYER MEET NEAR KOCHI

CONTEXT: At least two successive explosions ripped through a crowded Jehovah's Witnesses prayer convention at Kalamassery, 24 km from Kochi in Kerala, on Sunday morning, killing two people and injuring 41 other worshippers.

The police identified one of the deceased as Kumari, 53, from Thodupuzha. The other victim remains unidentified. The

police have detained Kochi resident Dominic Martin, a "disenchanted" member of the religious group, as a suspect in the case. They have booked him under provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, paving the way for a possible National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe.

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

GOVT. PREPARING TO RELEASE VISION INDIA 2047 DOCUMENT

CONTEXT: The Government is in the midst of finalising a national vision plan to make India a developed nation by 2047 and ensure that the country does not slip into a middle-income trap that several countries have fallen into at similar stages of development.

The Government of India is preparing to release a Vision India 2047 document, which will outline a plan to make India a developed nation by 2047, the centennial of its independence. The document is being prepared by the NITI Aayog, the government's think tank, and is expected to be released within the next few months.

Growth path

What does the future hold? Scenario building for macroeconomic indicators



Indicator	Units	2030	2040	2047
GDP at current prices	₹ trillion	609.04	1,759.79	3,604.94
Per capita GDP at current prices	₹	4,02,008	10,93,037	21,84,812
Exports	\$ trillion	1.58	4.56	8.67
Imports	\$ trillion	1.88	5.92	12.12
Investment	₹ trillion	195.5	591.1	1,273.40
Savings	₹ trillion	207.8	649.4	1,339.70

Source: NITI Aayog

The Vision India 2047 document is expected to focus on the following areas:

1. **Economic growth:** The document is expected to set ambitious targets for economic growth, with a focus on creating jobs and improving living standards for all Indians.
2. **Infrastructure development:** The document is expected to emphasize the importance of infrastructure development, including roads, railways, ports, and airports.
3. **Social development:** The document is expected to focus on improving the quality of life for all Indians, including access to healthcare, education, and sanitation.
4. **Sustainability:** The document is expected to address the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation.

The Vision India 2047 document is expected to be a roadmap for India's development over the next 25 years. It is expected to guide the government's policies and investments in all sectors.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PM DISCUSSES SECURITY SITUATION IN WEST ASIA WITH EGYPT PRESIDENT

CONTEXT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi discussed the security situation in West Asia on Saturday, October 29, 2023.

Both leaders expressed their concern over the increase in terrorism, violence, and civilian casualties in the region. They also discussed the need for an early restoration of peace and stability in the region. The two leaders also exchanged views on the latest developments in the Israel-Palestine conflict. They reiterated their support for a two-state solution to the conflict. The phone call between Modi and el-Sisi comes amid a heightened security situation in West Asia. The region has been witnessing a surge in terrorism and violence in recent months. This has led to a humanitarian crisis in many parts of the region, with millions of people displaced from their homes.

Summary of the phone call between PM Modi and Egyptian President el-Sisi:

1. Both leaders expressed their concern over the increase in terrorism, violence, and civilian casualties in the region.
2. Discussed the need for an early restoration of peace and stability in the region.
3. Exchanged views on the latest developments in the Israel-Palestine conflict.
4. Reiterated their support for a two-state solution to the conflict.

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO OVERSHOOT CARBON EMISSIONS GOAL, SAYS STUDY

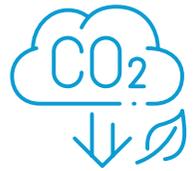
CONTEXT: A new study published in the journal Nature Climate Change has found that developed countries are on track to overshoot their carbon emissions reduction goals by a significant margin.

Missing targets

Developed countries are projected to emit 38% more carbon in 2030 than they have committed to

Party	2030 NDC target	Projected 2030 reduction
U.S.	50%	22%
Russia	70%	48%
Japan	46%	45%
U.K. and Northern Ireland	68%	56%
Canada	40%	30%
EU	55%	44%
Norway	55%	57%
Kazakhstan	15%	14%

■ Japan and Kazakhstan are set to miss their target by one percentage point



The study found that developed countries are projected to emit 38% more carbon in 2030 than they have committed to under the Paris Agreement. The study also found that the United States, Russia, and the European Union are responsible for 83% of this projected overshoot. The study's authors say that this overshoot will make it much more difficult to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius, the goal of the Paris Agreement.

The study's findings are a stark reminder of the need for developed countries to take more ambitious action to reduce their carbon emissions. Developed countries have a historical responsibility for climate change, and they have the resources and the technology to make a difference.

The study's authors call on developed countries to increase their investment in renewable energy, improve energy efficiency, and put a price on carbon emissions. They also call on developed countries to provide financial and technological assistance to developing countries to help them reduce their emissions.

The overshoot of carbon emissions by developed countries is a serious problem, but it is not too late to take action. With ambitious action, developed countries can still help the world avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

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ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

THE INDIAN RAILWAYS' REVENUE PROBLEM

CONTEXT: The Indian Railways (IR) is one of the largest railway networks in the world, carrying over 23 million passengers and over 3 million tonnes of freight daily. However, the IR has been facing a number of challenges in recent years, including a decline in revenue and a rise in costs.

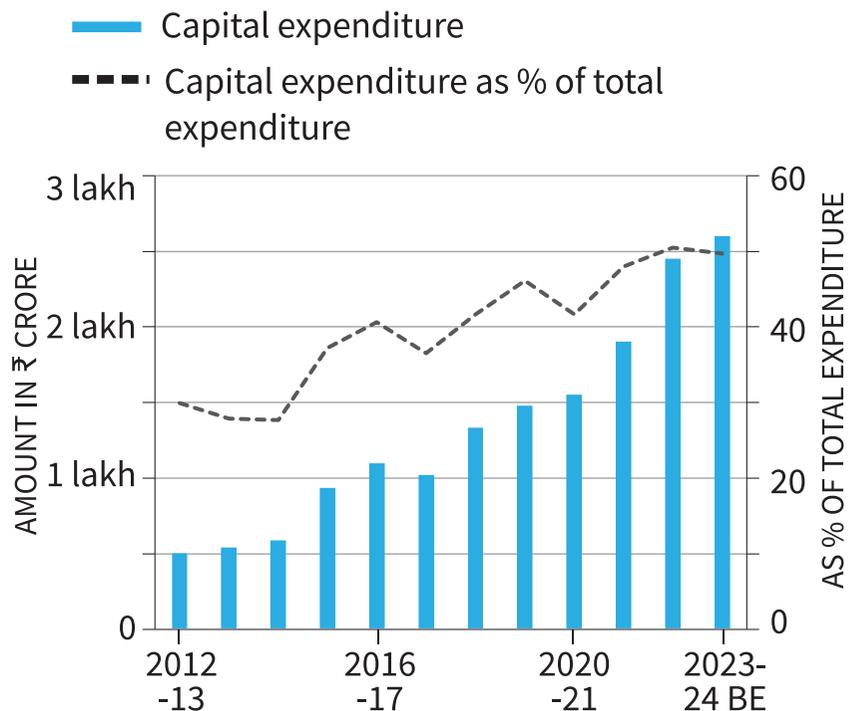
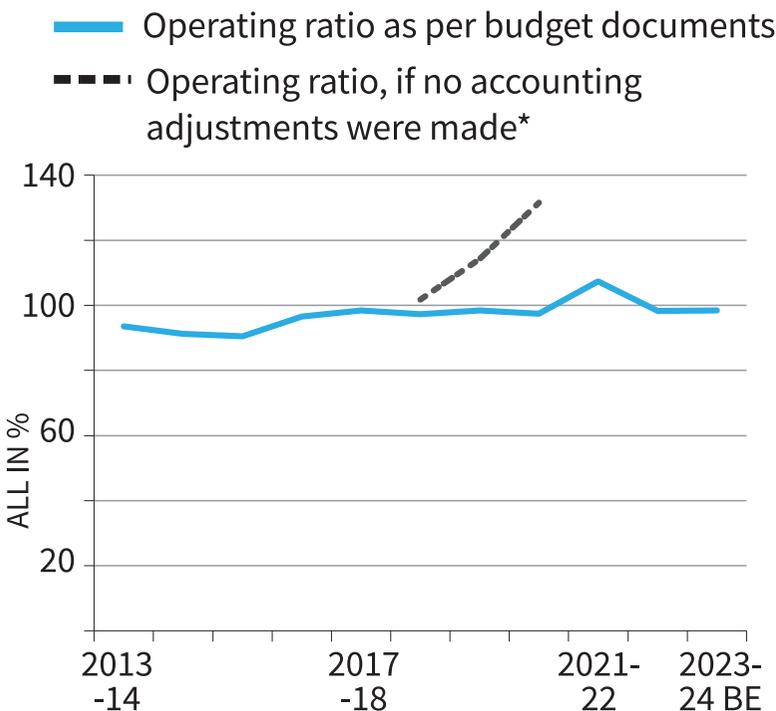
Revenue decline

The IR's revenue has been declining in recent years due to a number of factors, including:

1. Increased competition from other modes of transportation, such as buses and airplanes.
2. Subsidizing passenger fares.
3. Freight rates that are not competitive with other modes of transportation.
4. Inefficiencies in operations
5. Cost rise

Capex spending in Indian Railways

The unprecedented rise in capex appears to be predicated on the premise that the Indian Railways' financial performance should not be viewed in isolation but along with its role as an engine for the growth of the country's economy



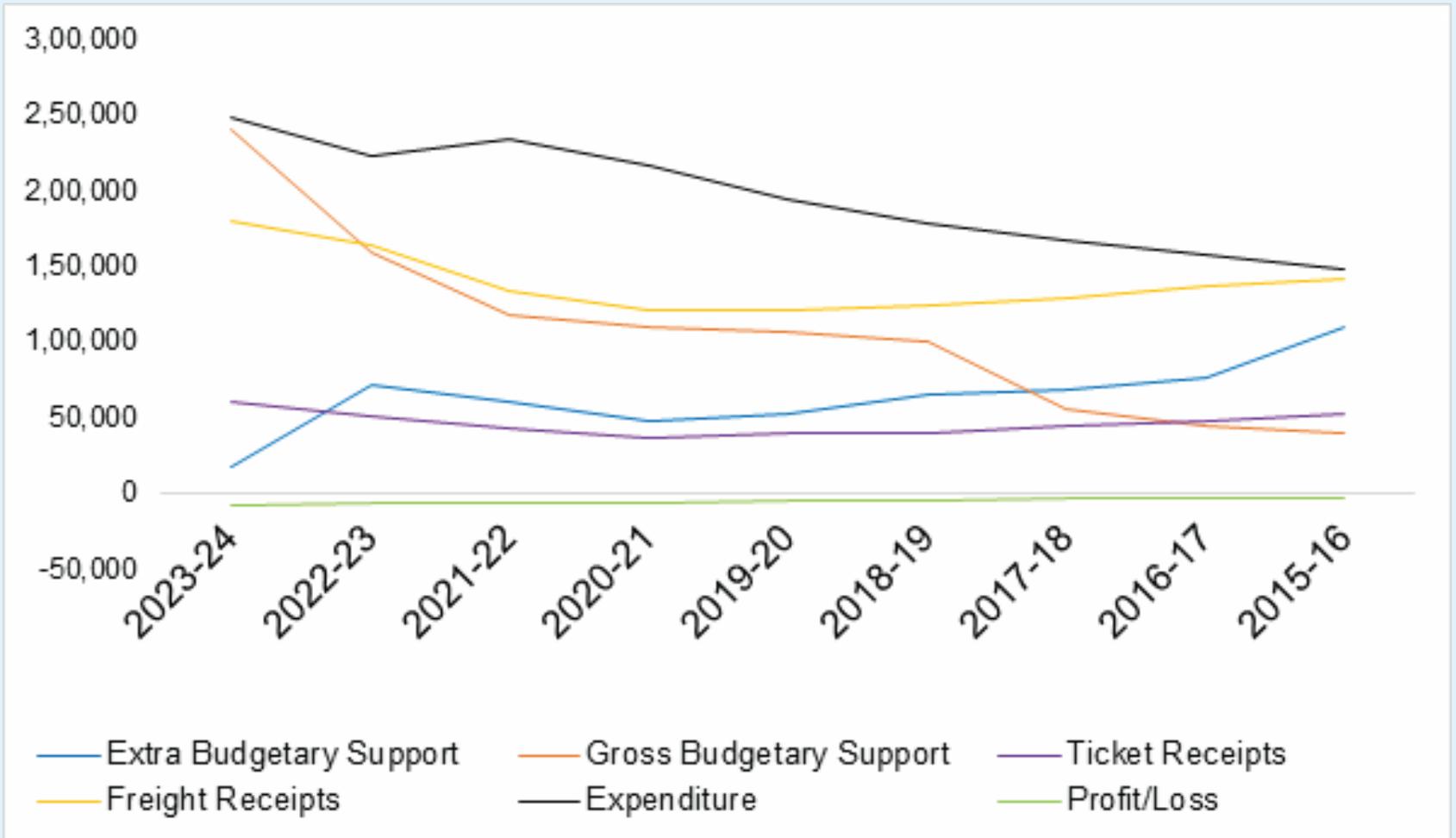
“Doing nothing is very hard to do. You never know when you’re finished.”—Leslie Nielsen

The IR's costs have been rising in recent years due to a number of factors, including:

1. Rising fuel and staff costs.
2. Investment in new infrastructure and rolling stock.
3. Implementation of safety measures.

Impact

The decline in revenue and the rise in costs have had a negative impact on the IR's financial health. The IR has been incurring losses for several years now. In 2022-23, the IR incurred a loss of ₹6,906 crore.



As you can see, the IR's revenue has been declining steadily over the past five years, while its costs have been rising steadily. This has led to a widening gap between the IR's revenue and costs, which has resulted in losses for the IR.

Government measures

The government has taken a number of measures to address the IR's financial problems, including:

1. Increasing passenger fares and freight charges.
2. Reducing costs by improving efficiency and eliminating waste.
3. Attracting investment through public-private partnerships.

The IR's financial problems are a serious challenge. The government needs to take more ambitious action to address these problems. The government needs to increase investment in the IR to improve its infrastructure and rolling stock. The

government also needs to reform the IR's operations to make it more efficient and customer-centric. In addition to the measures mentioned above, the government could also consider the following to improve the IR's financial health:

1. Develop new revenue streams, such as through advertising and commercial development of railway land.
2. Reduce subsidies on passenger fares.
3. Increase freight rates to make them more competitive with other modes of transportation.
4. Improve the quality of service to attract more passengers and freight customers.

By taking these measures, the government can help the IR to become a financially sustainable organization.

“Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education. — Martin Luther King Jr.



POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

GIVE UP IMPROPRIETY, DEMONSTRATE IMPARTIALITY

CONTEXT: The office of the Speaker emerged in medieval Britain, when the House of Commons needed a spokesman in their dealings with the King. Until the 17th century, the Speaker was often seen as an agent of the Crown. However, since the middle of the 19th century, the Speaker has been considered to be an impartial Chairman of the House of Commons. They are the custodians of the rights and privileges of the House, its committees and its members.

Under the Indian Constitution, the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies elect two of its members to be the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, respectively.

Role of the Speaker:

1. Acts as the Patron-in-Chief within the House, as the guardian of powers and privileges of the House members, House committees and the House as a whole.
2. Represents the House as its principal spokesperson outside the House premises.
3. Acts as ex-officio Chairman of the Indian Parliamentary Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Conference of 'Presiding Officers of State legislatures'.

Functions of the Speaker:

1. Maintain order and decorum within the House and regulate the House proceedings to conduct legislative business.
2. Preside over a joint sitting of the both Houses of Parliament summoned by the President.
3. Preside over a 'secret' sitting of the House at the request of the Leader of the House.
4. Adjourn the House or suspend the meeting in absence of a quorum.
5. Exercise casting votes.
6. Disqualify House members on grounds of defection under the provisions of the Tenth Schedule. In 1992, the Supreme Court expanded the scope of judicial review over the decision of the Speaker in this regard.

Powers of the Speaker: The Speaker of the Lok Sabha derives his powers and performs duties in accordance with the Constitution of India, the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of Lok Sabha, and Parliamentary Conventions.

1. Final interpreter of the provisions.
2. Constitution of India*.
3. Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of Lok Sabha.
4. Parliamentary precedents, within the House.

5. Makes final and binding decisions upon the nature of bill.
6. Appoints the Chairman of all the Parliamentary Committees of the Lok Sabha and supervises their functioning. The speaker acts as the Chairperson of the Business Advisory Committee, the Rules Committee and the General-Purpose Committee.

Provisions for ensuring independence and impartiality of the Speaker:

The Speaker holds a status equivalent to the Chief Justice of India in the order of precedence in Protocol:

1. Security of honorariums: Salaries, emoluments and allowances of a Speaker charged upon the Consolidated Fund of India and cannot be diminished during office tenure.
2. The Court cannot enquire into conduct of Speaker, while exercising powers to regulate procedure or conduct business or maintaining order in the House.
3. The actions and conduct of the Lok Sabha Speaker can be discussed only after adopting a Substantive Motion.
4. Security of tenure: The Speaker can be removed from the office via a resolution proposed and supported by at least 50 members and adopted by an absolute majority of the total strength of the House. ie, 273 members.
5. Impartiality in voting: The Speaker can only exercise casting votes and is not entitled to vote in the first instance.

Added the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution containing provisions regarding disqualification of MPs and MLAs / MLCs on grounds of political defection.

1. Voluntarily relinquishing membership of the political party.
2. Exercise voting contrary to whip issued by political party.
3. Independent member joining political party after elections.
4. Nominated House members joining any political party after the expiry of 6 months from the date of assuming office.

The Speaker is the authority to refer Bills introduced to the Parliamentary Standing Committees. However, even significant Bills that require detailed scrutiny are not referred to such committees. As against more than 60 % of Bills referred to committees in the Lok Sabha during 2004-14, less than 25 % have been referred during 2014-2023. While such partisanship by Speakers affects robust parliamentary functioning, it is their role in deciding disqualification petitions that can derail the stability of elected governments.

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Locked in

The charts are from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' report titled "Movement in and out of Gaza in 2022"

AFP



Restricted movement: A Palestinian man walks past shuttered shops during a general strike in Nablus in the occupied West Bank, on October 18, 2023, a day after a rocket hit a Gaza hospital killing hundreds.

Chart 1 | Chart shows exits of people from Gaza to or through Israel (M = million, k = 1,000)

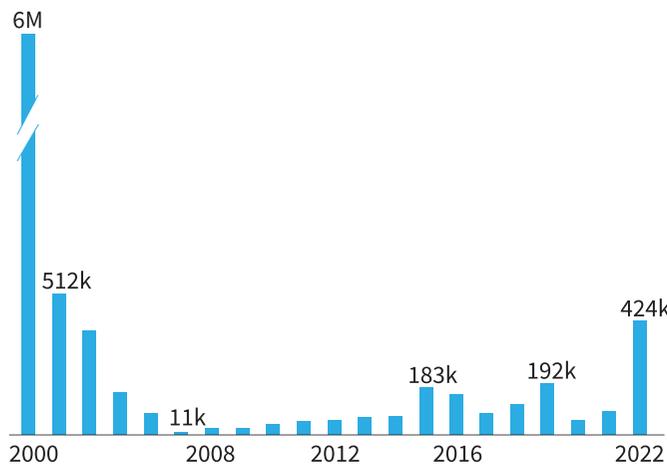


Chart 2 | Chart shows incoming goods to Gaza in terms of truckloads from Israel (k = 1,000)

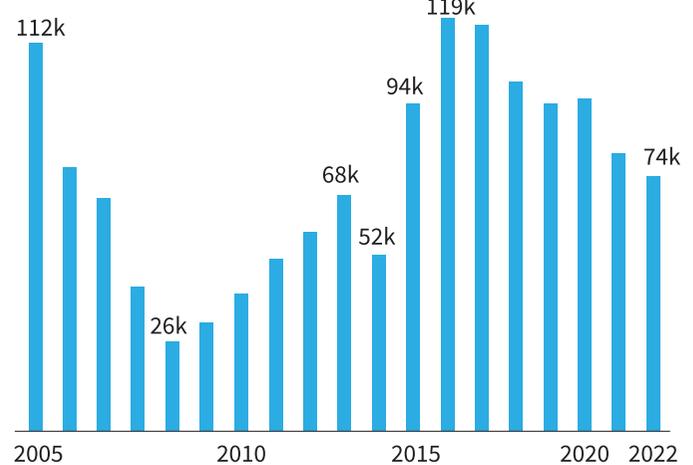


Chart 3 | Petrol and diesel (in litres) which came into Gaza from Israel and Egypt (M = million)

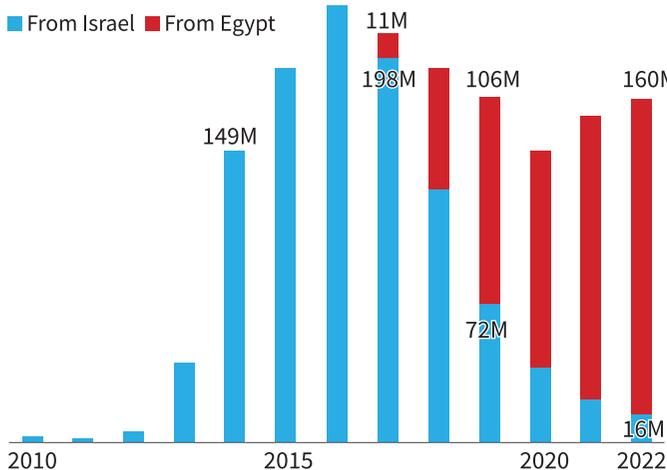
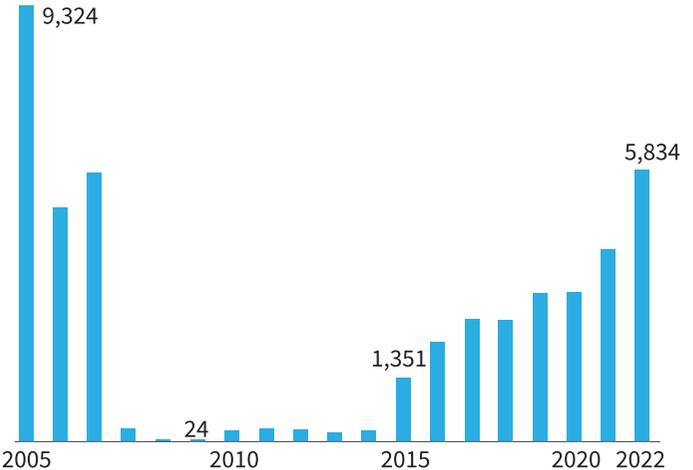


Chart 4 | The chart shows outgoing goods from Gaza to or through Israel



With entries and exits by air and sea banned, only three crossings — two controlled by Israel and one by Egypt — are available for movement in and out of Gaza. In 2022, 4.24 lakh people were allowed to exit from Gaza to Israel or through Israel to the West Bank. The total estimated population of Gaza in mid-2022 was 20 lakh. In other words, one in five people were allowed to exit once in 2022. The more than 4 lakh exit permits issued in 2022 is the highest in about two decades; the previous high of 5.21 lakh was recorded in 2004. These numbers pale in comparison to the 60 lakh exits recorded in 2000.

Chart 1, the exit of people permitted to Israel or through it took a dive in the 2000s and remained low in the 2010s due to escalation of hostility at various points in time.

Chart 2 shows that goods to Gaza from Israel reduced to the lowest levels immediately after the Israeli blockade in 2007.

Chart 3 shows petrol and diesel (in litres) which came into Gaza from Israel and Egypt.

Chart 4 shows outgoing goods from Gaza into Israel. In 2009, this was as low as 24 truckloads compared to 5,834 in 2022.

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