

## Mains Master

### SC quashes release of 11 convicts in Bilkis case

#### Background of the Case:

In 2002, during the Gujarat riots, Bilkis Bano suffered a brutal gangrape, and her family, including a two-month-old infant, was murdered. Subsequently, 11 men were convicted in 2008 and sentenced to life imprisonment for these heinous crimes.

#### Recent Supreme Court Verdict:

The recent Supreme Court ruling overturned the Gujarat government's decision to grant mass remission to these convicts. Justices criticized the ruling BJP government's actions, terming them driven by communal hatred and beyond their legal authority. They directed the convicts to return to jail within a fortnight, dismissing their pleas for sympathy.

#### Emphasis on Rule of Law:

The Justices raised poignant questions about whether heinous crimes against women should permit convicts' liberty through sentence reduction. They stressed the primacy of the rule of law over any liberty earned through its breach.

#### Jurisdictional and Legal Standpoint:

The Supreme Court clarified that Gujarat was not the appropriate government under Section 432(7)(b) for granting remission. Instead, Maharashtra, where the men were tried and sentenced, held jurisdiction for any such decisions.

#### Fraudulent Basis for Remission:

The SC found the May 2022 order allowing Gujarat's remission to be fraudulent, citing the cancellation of Gujarat's remission policy and its inapplicability to Maharashtra. It also noted the suppression of facts leading to this order.

#### Unpaid Fines and Legal Refusals:

The convicts failed to pay the fine imposed by the Mumbai court and faced refusals from multiple legal authorities, including the CBI, Mumbai Special Court, and Gujarat officials, regarding their plea for early release.

### BILKI BANO CASE TIMELINE

**Bilkis Bano Gang raped**  
**MAR 3, 2003**

A violent mob descended upon the family of 21-year-old Bilkis Bano in Randhikpur village near Ahmedabad. The woman was gang-raped, while seven members of her family were murdered.

**Life sentence upheld**  
**MAY 2017**

Bombay High Court upholds life sentences of the 11 convicts.

**Prematurely released**  
**AUG 15, 2022**

As part of the Gujarat government's remission policy, 11 convicts are released from Godhra sub-jail.

**SC issues Notice**  
**MAR 27, 2023**

SC notice to Centre, Gujarat government and others on a plea filed by Bilkis Bano.

**Verdict reserved**  
**OCT 12, 2023**

SC reserves its verdict after an 11-day hearing on the petitions, including the one filed by Bilkis

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**Conviction of 11 men**

**JAN 21, 2008**

A special court convicts 11 men and sentences them to life imprisonment for raping Bilkis Bano and murdering seven of her family members.

**Plea for premature release**

**MAY 13, 2022**

SC directs Gujarat government to consider the plea of a convict for premature release in terms of its policy of July 9, 1992.

**Bano moves to SC**

**NOV 30, 2022**

Bilkis Bano moves SC challenging the Gujarat government's decision to grant remission to 11 convicts saying their premature release has "shaken the conscience of society".

**Hearing starts**

**AUG 7, 2023**

SC starts final hearing on petitions challenging the Gujarat government's decision to grant remission.

**SC quashes remission**

**JAN 8, 2024**

SC quashes remission to 11 convicts, saying the orders were "stereotyped" and passed without application of mind. SC directs convicts to surrender to jail authorities within two weeks.



### Background:

- **2002 Gujarat Pogrom:** 11 men convicted of gang-raping Bilkis Bano and murdering her family members during the riots.
- Sentenced to life imprisonment by Mumbai Sessions Court after investigation transferred to CBI.
- **August 2022:** Gujarat government grants premature release to convicts.
- **Controversy erupts:** Public outrage, garlanding of convicts by supporters.

### Supreme Court Verdict:

- **Quashes orders releasing convicts, citing:**
  - Lack of jurisdiction for Gujarat government.
  - Gujarat government's "complicity" in facilitating release.
  - Failure to challenge erroneous earlier judgment.
- Directs convicts to return to prison within two weeks.

### Significance of the Verdict:

- **Upholding rule of law:** Jurisdiction, procedural correctness, and fair process emphasized.
- **Reassures faith in judiciary:** Holds power accountable during times of doubt.
- **Timely reminder of remission principles:** Based on individual merit, crime severity, reform potential, and societal impact.
- **Rejects mass remissions:** Life sentences require careful consideration, not blanket gestures.
- **Humanitarian considerations:** Balancing prisoner reform with victim/society well-being.

### Comprehensive Outlook:

- Verdict restores justice for Bilkis Bano and victims.
- Sets precedent for proper procedure and due process in remission cases.
- Offers hope for accountability of powerful government entities.
- Raises questions about potential political motives behind premature release.
- Highlights need for robust remission policies considering all stakeholders.

**Overall,** the Supreme Court's verdict in the Bilkis Bano case is a critical step towards upholding the rule of law, restoring faith in the judiciary, and ensuring fair and just application of remission policies in India.

This article tackles the intricate world of fossil fuels, outlining the dynamics shaping its future in 2024 and beyond. Here are the key takeaways:

### Global Trends:

- **Demand remains strong:** Global liquid fuel consumption is projected to rise in 2023 and 2024, despite the focus on renewables.
- **Supply tightens:** OPEC+ production cuts aim to balance demand and optimize reserves, creating a tight market.
- **Renewables play catch-up:** While not replacing fossil fuels, renewables are meeting the increased energy demand.
- **OPEC holds the reins:** Balancing high prices, economic stability, and non-OPEC competition is OPEC's key challenge.
- **Russia's influence lingers:** As a major exporter, Russia's oil output and pricing strategies significantly impact the global market.
- **Political considerations matter:** US elections and OPEC's interaction with non-OPEC producers add another layer of complexity.

### Challenges and Opportunities for India:

- **Vulnerability to global shifts:** Price fluctuations and geopolitical tensions create uncertainty for India's energy security.
- **Diversification as a shield:** Investments in renewables, energy efficiency, and clean technologies are crucial for mitigating risks.
- **Sustainable strategies for the future:** Balancing consumer affordability with long-term stability through renewables is key.
- **Boosting domestic production:** Increased efforts like ONGC's KG-DWN-98/2 project are essential for self-reliance.
- **Maintaining a firm and adaptable energy policy:** India needs to navigate international pressures and adjust its strategy as needed.

**Overall,** the fossil fuel market in 2024 appears dynamic and unpredictable. As we move towards a future powered by renewables, countries like India must adopt comprehensive strategies to ensure energy security, affordability, and sustainability.

## Prelims Booster

### Nolan's Oppenheimer sweeps Golden Globes on a bittersweet night for Gerwig's Barbie

#### 🏆 "Oppenheimer" Dominates:

- Christopher Nolan's drama "Oppenheimer" wins five prizes, including best drama, best director for Nolan, and acting awards for Cillian Murphy and Robert Downey Jr.
- Nolan expresses being drawn to J. Robert Oppenheimer's tragedy, a scientist with loyalty to his country and substantial guilt.

#### 📺 "Barbie" Misses Out:

- Despite being a summer hit, "Barbie" loses to "Poor Things" for best comedy film, even though it won best song.
- French drama "Anatomy of a Fall" surprises many by winning best screenplay over "Barbie."

#### 🏆 Other Winners:

- Emma Stone wins best comedy actress for "Poor Things," and Da'Vine Joy Randolph for her supporting role in "The Holdovers."
- Hayao Miyazaki's film "The Boy and the Heron" takes the award for best animated film.

### Swiss, Thai groups close first sale of Paris pact carbon offsets

- 🌍 Carbon Offsets in Action: The sale of carbon offsets represents a crucial step in implementing the Paris Agreement, allowing governments and companies to compensate for their greenhouse gas emissions by investing in projects that reduce emissions elsewhere.
- 📄 Details of the Deal: Switzerland's KliK Foundation purchased 1,916 carbon credits from Thailand's Energy Absolute in December, generated by Energy Absolute's initiative to deploy up to 4,000 electric buses in Bangkok, reducing CO2 emissions from petrol-fueled vehicles.
- 📈 Market Dynamics: The sale sets a precedent in a growing carbon credit market, influencing forthcoming UN rules governing offsets, with uncertainties and potential revisions as the market matures.
- 🏛️ Regulatory Influence: Both Energy Absolute and KliK, along with their respective country regulators, can shape the evolving market dynamics through their actions under the Paris Agreement.

### South Korea superconductivity claim revived with new data

- 🔬 Material and Sign of Superconductivity: Scientists reported a potential sign of superconductivity in copper-substituted lead apatite, known as LK-99, observed as the Meissner effect, indicating near-room-temperature superconductivity (RTP).

- 🌐 Importance and Applications: Finding a material displaying RTP superconductivity holds immense value for various applications, including zero-loss electricity transmission, medical diagnostics, computing, and advanced electronics.
- 🔍 Hype and Scientific Controversies: Recent controversies in the field involving claims of superconductivity have created skepticism and caution within the scientific community, prompting careful consideration of new findings.
- 🔬 New Study's Approach and Findings: Researchers conducted direct current (DC) measurements to observe the Meissner effect in LK-99, indicating its superconducting properties. The study's experiments involved hysteresis loops and temperature observations, suggesting near-RTP superconductivity.
- ⚠️ Challenges and Caveats: Limited superconducting portions in the samples, interference issues, and the need for rigorous identification and synthesis techniques to isolate the superconducting material and increase its fraction in the samples for further investigation.

### Understanding the EU's carbon border tax

- 🌍 EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM): A policy designed to tax carbon-intensive imports into the EU, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect domestic industries from carbon leakage, posing significant challenges for India's manufacturing sector.
- 🎯 EU's Goal: To ensure a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, part of its broader European Green Deal, by imposing import duties on carbon-intensive industries from non-EU countries, reducing competitiveness for these products in the EU market.
- 📅 Transitional and Definitive Phases: The transitional phase of CBAM began in October 2023, with the definitive phase commencing from January 2026, necessitating importers to surrender CBAM certificates equivalent to the declared emissions.
- 🇮🇳 India's Response: India has challenged CBAM at the World Trade Organization and is working on its own carbon trading mechanism, the Carbon Credit Trading System (CCTS), to incentivize emission reductions and clean energy investments.
- 🌱 Environmental Commitments: India needs swift action to formulate carbon taxation measures aligning with the Paris Agreement principles while protecting its industries' interests, considering the imminent impact of CBAM on its exports.