

CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Topic: Climate Change

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Atomic energy, hydrogen power India's net zero plan

India announces long-term strategy at COP-27. It will help the nation be carbon neutral by 2070, a commitment made by Prime Minister at Glasgow last year, says Environment Minister

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

At the United Nations Conference of Parties (COP) in Sharm el-Sheikh, India on Monday announced its long-term strategy to transition to a "low emissions" pathway, which is premised on expanding its nuclear power capacity by at least three-fold in the next decade, apart from becoming an international hub for producing green hydrogen and increasing the proportion of ethanol in petrol.

Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said these steps were consonant with India's "five-decade journey" to net zero, or being carbon neutral by 2070 – a commitment made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Glasgow,

India's road to 'net zero'

At COP-27, India announced its long-term strategy to transition to a 'low emissions' pathway to become carbon neutral by 2070

KEY MILESTONES

- The National Hydrogen Mission, launched in 2021, aims to make India a green hydrogen hub
- At least a three-fold increase in nuclear capacity by 2032
- Achieving an ethanol blending target of 20% by 2025
- Maximising the use of electric vehicles, increase public transport
- Increased climate finance to be provided by developed nations
- The long-term strategy aims at keeping global temperatures well below 2 degrees Celsius and, ambitiously, 1.5 degrees Celsius by the century-end



Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav at the COP-27 summit in Egypt on Monday. REUTERS

where the 26th COP was held last year.

While 195 member countries, signatories to the UN climate agreements, were obliged to submit the long-term document by 2022, only 57 – India is the latest addition – have done so. "The LT-LEDS (Long Term-Low Emission Development

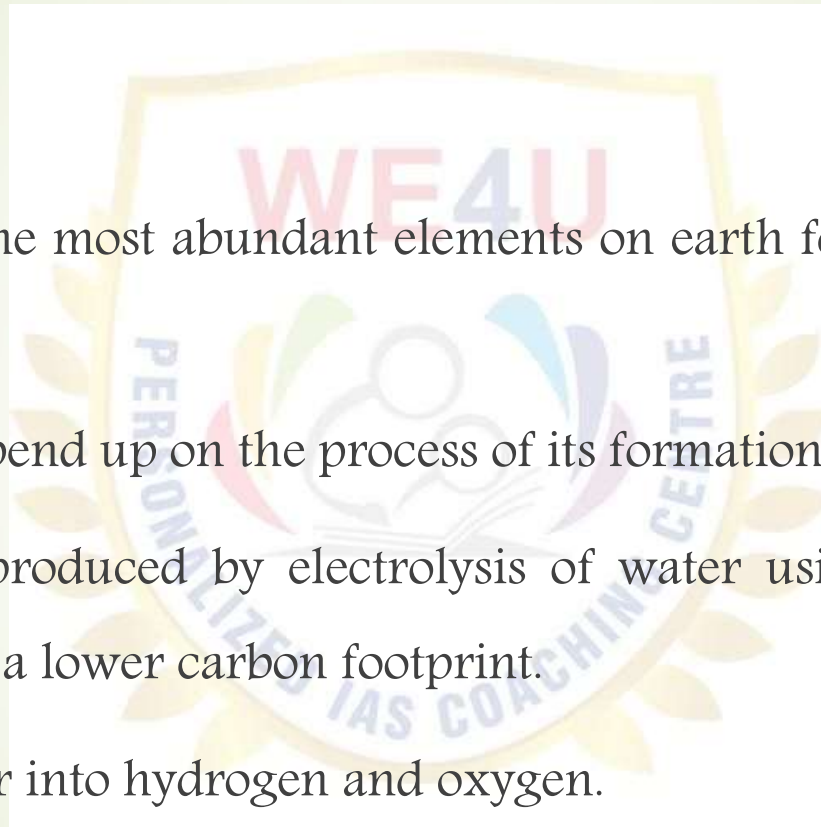
Strategy) has been prepared in the framework of India's right to an equitable and fair share of the global carbon budget. We have ensured that the strategy emphasises energy security, energy access, and employment, while keeping focus on our vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat," Mr. Yadav said. "The journey to

net zero is a five-decade-long one and India's vision is therefore evolutionary and flexible, accommodating new technological developments and developments in the global economy and international cooperation."

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Hydrogen

- ▶ Hydrogen is one of the most abundant elements on earth for a cleaner alternative fuel option.
- ▶ Type of hydrogen depend up on the process of its formation:
- ▶ Green hydrogen is produced by electrolysis of water using renewable energy (like Solar, Wind) and has a lower carbon footprint.
- ▶ Electricity splits water into hydrogen and oxygen.
- ▶ By Products : Water, Water Vapor.



Ethanol Blending:

- Ethanol: It is one of the principal biofuels, which is naturally produced by the fermentation of sugars by yeasts or via petrochemical processes such as ethylene hydration.
- Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP): It is aimed at reducing the country's dependence on crude oil imports, cutting carbon emissions and boosting farmers' incomes.
- Blending Target: The Government of India has advanced the target for 20% ethanol blending in petrol (also called E20) to 2025 from 2030.

Topic:

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SC says forced conversions may affect national security, freedom of religion

► Article 25



Centre seeks time from SC in Places of Worship Act case

CJI-led Bench ordered the govt. to file its affidavit clarifying its views by Dec. 12; Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta told the court that 'detailed consultations' are needed at a 'particular level'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Monday sought more time from the Supreme Court to clarify its stand on the validity of the Places of Worship Act, saying "detailed consultations" are needed at a "particular level". **The 1991 Act protects the identity and character of religious places as they were on August 15, 1947.**

A Bench led by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud ordered the Centre, represented by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, to file its affidavit clarifying its views by December 12. The court agreed to list the case for hearing in the first week of January. Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, for peti-



Parliament has mandated in no uncertain terms that history and its wrongs shall not be used as instruments to oppress the present and the future

SUPREME COURT

tioner Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, said the government had sought similar adjournments in the case twice before.

On October 10, the court asked the Centre whether a Constitution Bench judgment in the Ram Janmabhoomi case had already settled the question of validity of the Act. The Ayodhya judgment had found that the 1991 Act spoke "to our history and to the fu-

ture of the nation... In preserving the character of places of public worship, Parliament has mandated in no uncertain terms that history and its wrongs shall not be used as instruments to oppress the present and the future".

Mr. Mehta had ventured his personal opinion that the remarks in the Ayodhya judgment about the 1991 Act would not preclude the court from exa-

mining the validity of the statute now. "That [Ayodhya judgment] was given in a different context and may not cover the issue here," Mr. Mehta gave his opinion. Mr. Dwivedi had agreed that the comments in the Ayodhya verdict was merely *obiter dicta*.

Advocates P.B. Suresh, Vipin Nair and Vishnu Shankar Jain, appearing for petitioner Vishwa Bhadra Pujari Purohit Mahasangh, said the validity of the Act was not in question before the Constitution Bench in the Ayodhya case. A slew of petitions has been filed in the Supreme Court against the Act, contending it has illegally fixed a retrospective cut-off date. The objective of these petitions is to set right a "historical wrong".

Topic:

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Places of Worship Act

- It is described as “An Act to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”

Exemption:

- The disputed site at Ayodhya was exempted from the Act. Due to this exemption, the trial in the Ayodhya case proceeded even after the enforcement of this law.

Topic:

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- Besides the Ayodhya dispute, the Act also exempted:
- Any place of worship which is an ancient and historical monument, or an archaeological site covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
- A suit that has been finally settled or disposed of.
- Any dispute that has been settled by the parties or conversion of any place that took place by acquiescence before the Act commenced.

Topic: Agriculture

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U.P. farmers upset as govt. unlikely to give out SAP for sugar cane

A. M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh government is expecting a bumper crop as sugar cane harvest is at the peak in the State, but it is unlikely to announce the State Advised Price (SAP) for sugar cane for this season.

Though farmers have been demanding an increase in the SAP considering the higher input cost, Uttar Pradesh Sugarcane Minister Laxmi Narayan Chaudhary told *The Hindu* that such a proposal is not before the Cabinet at present. The State government's claim is that the

SAP announced in 2021 is among the highest in the country. Farmers said though the harvest of sugar cane started in October first week and the sugar mills have started crushing the produce for more than a month-and-a-half, the delay in announcing the SAP is condemnable.

Mr. Chaudhary told *The Hindu* that Uttar Pradesh has the highest SAP after Punjab and Haryana. "At present, last year's SAP will continue. The Cabinet is yet to consider any demand to increase the SAP. Till a decision to increase the SAP is taken, last year's SAP will continue," he said.

► FRP?

- FRP is fixed under a sugarcane control order, 1966.
- It is the minimum price that sugar mills are supposed to pay to the farmers.
- However, states determine their own State Agreed Price (SAP) which is generally higher than the FRP.

Topic:

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Who determines Sugarcane prices?

- Sugarcane prices are determined by the Centre as well as States.
- The Centre announces Fair and Remunerative Prices which are determined on the recommendation of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and are announced by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, which is chaired by Prime Minister.
- The State Advised Prices (SAP) are announced by key sugarcane producing states which are generally higher than FRP.

Topic:

11

Project to track small fishing vessels now makes progress

Third edition of the pan-India coastal defence exercise 'Sea Vigil-22' will begin today; it was started after the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

A delayed project to install transponders on small fishing vessels, under 20 metres in length, as part of coastal security measures instituted after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks is making progress, with a project under way in Tamil Nadu.

In a related development, the third edition of the 'pan-India' coastal defence Exercise 'Sea Vigil-22' is scheduled to be held on November 15 and 16, the Navy said on Monday. The exercise was conceptualised in 2018 to validate various measures that have been instituted towards enhancing maritime security since '26/11'.

The process of installing transponders on sub-20 metre boats, commenced with a pilot project in Tamil Nadu for 5,000 vessels, is under way, Vice-Admiral Ashok Kumar (retd), National Maritime Security Coordinator, said. To allay the concerns of fishermen, the transponders with positioning navigation systems have been modified into a two-way communication system, he said. There are close to three



Safety measures: An automatic identification system was made compulsory for all vessels over 20 metres in length. APF

lakh registered fishing vessels, of which around 2.5 lakh are under 20 metres, he added.

An Automatic Identification System (AIS) was made compulsory for all vessels above 20 metres after the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai. The decision was taken by the National Committee on Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security, headed by the Cabinet Secretary, set up to look into issues related to coastal security. However, for vessels under 20 metres, the process has been delayed for several reasons.

Verification and monitoring of a large number of

fishing vessels in India has been greatly eased by the creation of the online ReALCraft (Registration and Licensing of Fishing Craft), the Indian Navy said in written response to questions from *The Hindu*.

"The exercise will be undertaken along the entire 7,516-km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone of India and will involve all the coastal States and Union Territories along with other maritime stakeholders, including the fishing and coastal communities," the Navy said.

The exercise is a build-up towards the major Theatre Level Readiness Operational Exercise.

- To enhance India's maritime security, India will begin the third edition of the Sea Vigil maritime exercise on Tuesday. The two-day long multi-exercise will cover the 7,516 km-long coastline of the country.

Topic:

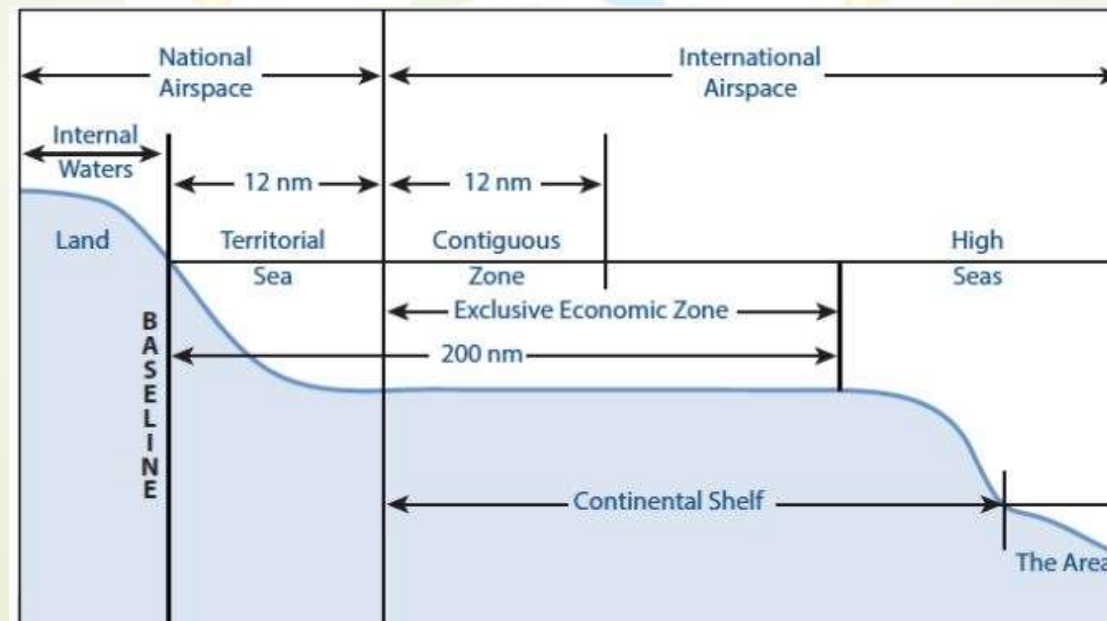
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- ▶ Along with covering India's coastline, the exercise will also take place in the exclusive economic zone. With the collaborative participation of the Indian Navy, Coast Guard, Customs department, and other maritime agencies, Sea Vigil will help in validating the maritime security mechanism.
- ▶ The exercise was conceptualised in 2018 to assess the various security measures that were taken to enhance maritime security after the Mumbai terror attack in 2008.

Topic: Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):

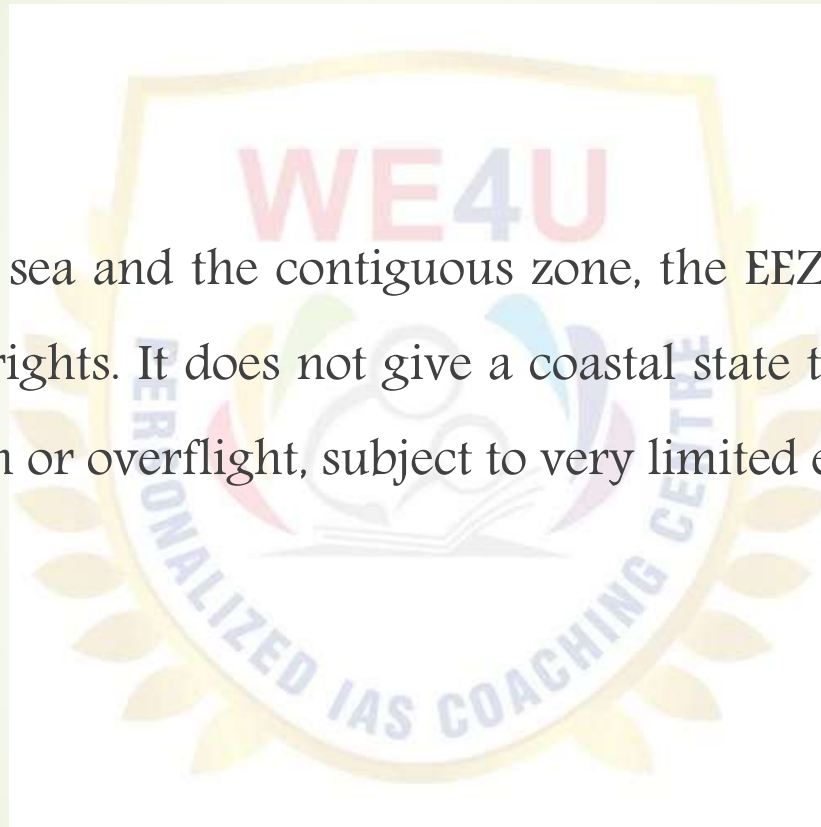
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- ▶ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982, also known as Law of the Sea divides marine areas into five main zones namely- Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas.



- ▶ Each coastal State may claim an EEZ beyond and adjacent to its territorial sea that extends seaward up to 200 nm from its baselines.
- ▶ Within its EEZ, a coastal state has:
- ▶ Sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing natural resources, whether living or nonliving, of the seabed and subsoil.
- ▶ Rights to carry out activities like the production of energy from the water, currents and wind.

- ▶ Unlike the territorial sea and the contiguous zone, the EEZ only allows for the above-mentioned resource rights. It does not give a coastal state the right to prohibit or limit freedom of navigation or overflight, subject to very limited exceptions.



Topic:

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Wholesale inflation slipped to single digit at 8.4% in Oct.

Base effect, cooling commodity prices helped; this is the fifth successive month of wholesale inflation moderating since it hit a record high of 16.63% in May; food price inflation eased to 6.5%

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India's wholesale price inflation slipped below 10% for the first time in 19 months this October, when it eased to 8.4% from 10.7% in September, thanks to base effects and cooling commodity prices. This is the fifth successive month of wholesale inflation moderating since it hit a record high of 16.63% in May.

The inflation rate in October 2021 was 13.8% and was even higher at 14.9% in November last year, so economists at ICRA expect the

Pace lets up

This is the first time in 19 months that wholesale inflation has slipped below 10%

- The inflation rate in October 2021 was 13.8% and was even higher at 14.9% in November last year
- Economists hence expect the base effect to intensify and bring headline wholesale inflation down to between 6% and 7% in November
- Fuel and power inflation dropped to 23.2% in October from 32.6% in September



■ Going forward, some food articles could show a sharp uptick in prices, particularly vegetables and cereals

base effect to intensify and bring headline wholesale inflation down to between 6% and 7% in November.

Wholesale food price inflation eased further in October to 6.5% from 8.1% in September while inflation

in manufactured goods dropped to 4.4% from 6.3% a month earlier. Fuel and power inflation dropped to 23.2% in October from 32.6% in September.

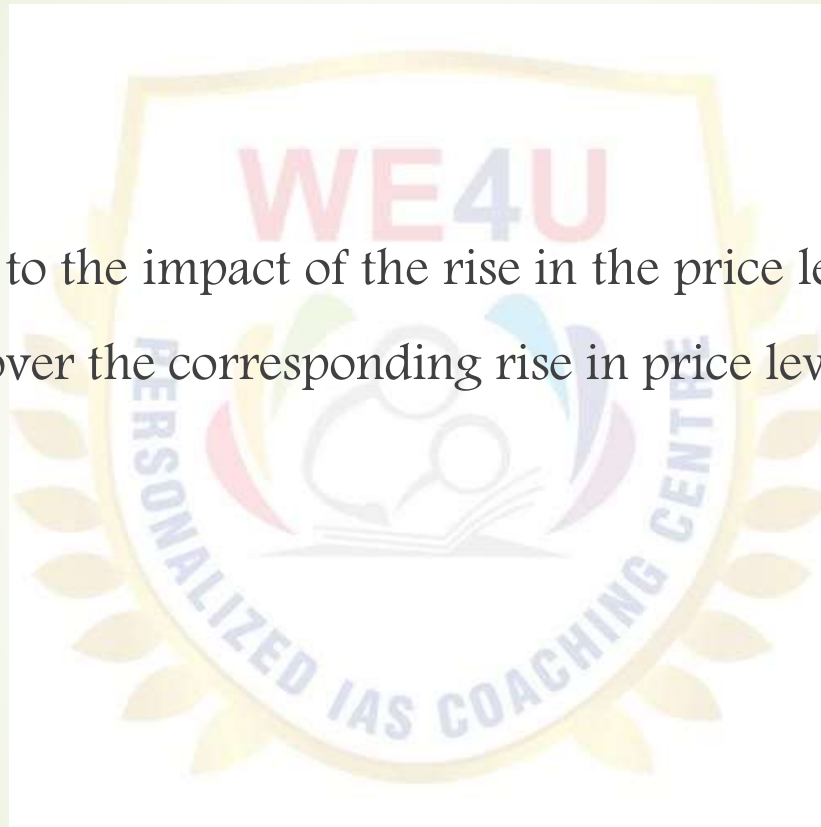
'Food price uptick'
"Wholesale inflation will continue to moderate on the back of the base effect as well as softening of global commodity prices," said Bank of Baroda economist Jahnvi.

However, some food articles would tend to show a sharp uptick in prices, particularly vegetables and cereals, while pulses may inch up too, she cautioned.

Topic:

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- ▶ The **base effect** refers to the impact of the rise in the price level (i.e. last year's inflation) in the previous year over the corresponding rise in price levels in the current year





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