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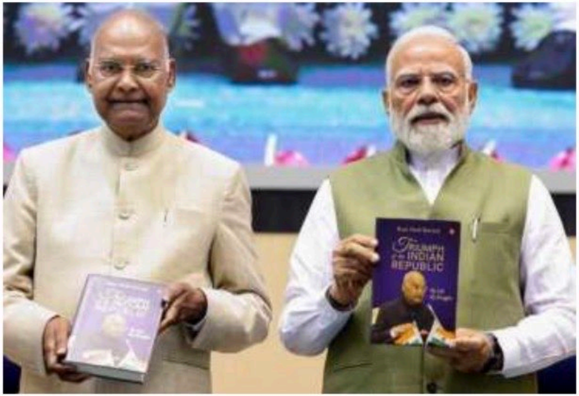
In 'era of reels', avoid shortcuts, read autobiographies, Modi tells youth

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday urged young people in the "era of reels" not to take shortcuts, and instead read autobiographies of the people they admired to get a unique perspective on historical events.

Speaking at the launch of former President Ram Nath Kovind's autobiography, *Triumph of the Indian Republic: My Life, My Struggles*, he said Mr. Kovind's life showed how determination could help a person overcome adversity and rise to the highest constitutional office.

Mr. Modi appealed to the youth to read autobiographies as such books offered the opportunity to understand a particular period through the life of someone who had experienced it.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with former president Ram Nath Kovind during the launch of latter's autobiography in New Delhi. PTI

"This is the era of reels. Social media influencers often pull you in and take you down certain paths. In this age of shortcuts, let us remember a message often displayed at railway stations: a shortcut will cut you short. This is written because some people have a habit of jumping onto the tracks instead of using the railway bridge. However, if there is a shortcut you should take to get ahead in life, it is to read the autobiography of someone you admire," Mr. Modi said.

Engaging with Gen Z

His remarks come at a time when the Centre and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have stepped up efforts to engage with Gen Z on social media.

He highlighted Mr. Kovind's continuing public engagement, saying that the former President had not rested after demitting office, and was working on the simultaneous election initiative, which could, Mr. Modi said, "open a new chapter in Indian democracy". "We need many more young people who would be like Kovind*ji* in future – people who are not defeated by circumstances but possess the determination to overcome every challenge," he said.

Mr. Kovind recalled hardships in his childhood and the values he imbibed from his surroundings.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, and several Union Ministers attended the event.

Context [GS-I: Indian Society & Culture | GS-II: Governance & Youth]

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while launching former President Ram Nath Kovind's autobiography, Triumph of the Indian Republic: My Life, My Struggles, encouraged young people to move beyond the culture of short-form digital content and engage with books and autobiographies. Kovind's life journey—from his humble beginnings to becoming President of India (2017–2022)—provides insights into perseverance, public service, constitutional institutions and India's democratic journey. The discussion also highlights the importance of deeper reading and historical perspectives for informed youth engagement in the digital age.

Retail inflation hits 19-month high of 4.45% in July

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Retail inflation in India rose to a 19-month high of 4.45% in July, driven up by higher food and fuel prices, official data released on Wednesday showed.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation showed that transport, food, and restaurant and accommodation services, became costlier in July, while inflation in other services such as healthcare, recreation, and sports and culture, cooled marginally.

The CPI series was updated earlier this year, with a new base year of 2024. As a result, while there is historical data for the overall index that goes back to August 2021, sector-wise data is available only from January 2026 onwards.

Inflation in the food and beverages category quickened to 5.2% in July 2026 from 5.05% a month earlier.

According to Rajeev Sharan, Head of Research at Brickwork Ratings, this was driven by "fresh spikes in onion and garlic alongside persistently high ginger prices, even as potato and tomato swung into deflation".

The expectation ahead is that food inflation will rise further, Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at the Bank of Baroda said.

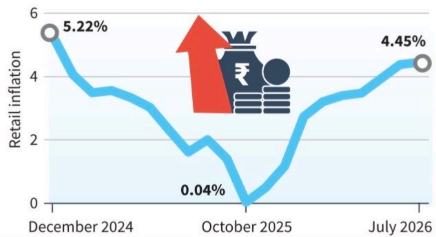
Monsoon impact

"While the monsoon has recovered substantially in July, there has been news of crop damage due to excess rain," Mr. Sabnavis said.

"This, combined with a longer cropping period and hence harvest, will push up prices of pulses in particular. Global prices of edible oils are also high, which is being felt in domestic markets," he said.

Steep climb

Retail inflation rose to a 19-month high of 4.45% in July, driven by higher food and fuel prices



Driven by higher food and fuel prices, inflation in the restaurants and accommodation services segment quickened to 7.7% in July, the highest this year, up from a previous yearly-high of 6.9% in June.

"The war impact on prices can be seen from higher inflation for restaurants and food services where higher fuel prices have made units increase prices," Mr. Sabnavis explained. "While there is some normalisation in supply of fuel, prices remain where they are and tend to be inelastic in downward direction."

Inflation in the transport sector also quickened to 4.4% in July 2026 from 4.3% in June.

Cooling inflation

There were, however, some services that saw inflation easing in July.

The health segment, for example, saw inflation cooling to 1.3% in July 2026 from 1.4% in June. Inflation in this segment has been falling since February 2026.

The other segment that saw inflation easing was the 'recreation, sport and culture' category to 1.6% in July 2026 from 1.75% a month earlier.

While inflation in the 'personal care, social protection and miscellaneous goods & services' category – which includes gold and silver purchases – remained in double digits at 14.8% in July 2026, it was the lowest level recorded so far this year.

Context [GS-III: Indian Economy – Inflation]

India's retail inflation, measured through the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose to 4.45% in July 2026, a 19-month high, mainly due to rising food and fuel-related prices.

1. CPI — Basics

- **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**: Measures the change in prices of a representative basket of goods and services purchased by households; it is the principal measure of retail inflation in India.
- **Ministry**: CPI is compiled by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) through the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- **Base year**: The latest CPI series uses 2024 = 100 as the base year.
- **Coverage**: It covers rural and urban consumers, with a combined CPI used for the national inflation rate.
- **Major components**: Food & beverages, housing, clothing & footwear, fuel & light, household goods, health, transport, education and recreation, among others.

2. Latest Inflation Data

- **CPI inflation**: 4.45% (July 2026) — up from 4.38% (June).
- **Food inflation**: 5.52%, making food the major source of upward pressure.
- **Rural vs Urban**: 4.84% rural and 3.96% urban inflation.
- **RBI target**: 4%, with a tolerance band of 2–6% under the flexible inflation-targeting framework.

3. Why Inflation Increased?

- **Food prices**: Fresh increases in onion, ginger and pulses, while global edible-oil prices remained elevated.
- **Weather**: Excess rainfall and crop damage may reduce supply and push up prices, particularly of pulses.
- **Fuel costs**: Higher fuel prices increased transportation and food-service costs; restaurants and accommodation inflation rose to 7.7%.
- **Global factors**: West Asian geopolitical tensions and elevated global commodity prices added to domestic price pressures.

How sustainable is India's E20 push?

In August, the government told the Lok Sabha that the ethanol blending programme had helped save around ₹2 lakh crore in foreign exchange. However, Opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi and Arvind Kejriwal, have launched campaigns against E20, saying it harms vehicles and that the government is forcing it on people

EXPLAINER

M. Kalyanaraman

The story so far:

Opposition leaders such as Rahul Gandhi and Arvind Kejriwal have launched campaigns against E20 saying it harms vehicles and that the government is forcing it on people. Mr. Kejriwal alleged that India has "yielded" to pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to buy ethanol from the United States.

What is the status of production?

The government's target was to produce 10-11 billion litres of ethanol so that 20% of petrol used in transport vehicles could come from ethanol produced in India, with the money being funnelled into the Indian economy rather than becoming a foreign exchange outgo through crude oil imports. Taking advantage of the policy push, India's distillery capacity has ramped up and is now capable of producing some 18-20 billion litres from some 500 distilleries. For this ethanol year, which runs November to October, the oil companies have contracted to procure some 10.5 billion litres of ethanol.

Will it spur corn imports from U.S.?

There is no evidence of a surge in ethanol or maize (corn) imports in Ministry of Commerce statistics. In any case, direct ethanol import for petroleum blending is banned, though the U.S. corn lobby has been pushing for India to increase corn imports. Government figures for this ethanol year show that 45% of the ethanol for petrol blending will come from maize, FCI rice some 22%, sugarcane juice 16%, B-heavy molasses some 10%, damaged foodgrains around 4.5% and C-heavy molasses 1.1%. India's maize output grew by 45% in three years to 55 million tonnes in 2025-26, with more than 20% of it going into ethanol, says Shankar Lal Jat of Indian Council of Maize Research, adding that there is no need to import it.

Policy push: A billboard promoting E20 fuel policy at a fuel station in New Delhi. AP

Sugarcane juice and B-heavy molasses go into sugar production and they are now being diverted to ethanol. The Indian Sugar Manufacturers' Association reported that the closing stock of sugar in September of 2025 was around 5 million tonnes, and this year too, the closing stock is expected to be 5 million tonnes. This indicates the diversion to ethanol has not affected sugar availability or stocks. Yet, in the event of a monsoon failure, crop losses and foodgrain shortages, the diversion of FCI rice, sugarcane juice and B-heavy molasses to ethanol production will come under stress, raising the possibility of corn imports.

Should we be worried about using E20 in our vehicles?

If you bought your vehicle after April 2023, you can fill your petrol tank with E20, shut it and forget it because that's when the Bharat Stage 6 Phase 2 (Real Driving Emissions) mandate took effect. Vehicles built after this deadline were factory-engineered for E20 – with ethanol-resistant elastomers, fluorinated fuel lines, upgraded pump seals and recalibrated engine control units. These roughly 70 million vehicles, about 23% of India's active petrol fleet, face little cause for concern.

The remaining 77% – nearly 240 million legacy two-wheelers and cars built for E5 or E10 – are the genuine worry. Ethanol is a polar solvent that degrades older rubber compounds and plastics, hardening and cracking fuel hoses over time. It is also hygroscopic: it absorbs atmospheric moisture, and in vehicles left parked for extended periods, the ethanol-water mixture separates and settles, forming an acidic layer that corrodes tanks, damages fuel pumps and clogs filters with sludge. Consumer surveys by LocalCircles found 66% of pre-2023 owners reporting mileage losses exceeding 10%, and 55% reporting increased maintenance.

IIT Kanpur's Engine Research Laboratory maintains that E20 causes no notable damage, with efficiency loss under 5% – attributing most complaints to driving habits and traffic conditions. But independent mechanics and automotive communities dispute this, citing real-world fuel pump and injector failures traced to ethanol's solvent and low-lubricity properties.

The government told Parliament in August that one leading automobile manufacturer had serviced 2.84 crore vehicles in FY 2025-26, including about 1.5 crore legacy vehicles, without finding E20-linked engine damage. Another two-wheeler maker reported similar findings. On mileage, it said government and manufacturer studies showed an efficiency penalty of about 2 to 6% in some vehicles designed for E10, though this too was influenced by driving conditions, habits and maintenance.

A transparent and more phased rollout such as in Brazil, where the transition to high levels of ethanol along with modifications to vehicles happened over several decades in a stable manner, would have taken the people into confidence. In India, the 10% milestone was reached in 2022. Within three years, the blending was ramped up to 20% with very little information and advisories coming from manufacturers.

Has ethanol blending helped mitigate oil supply crisis?

In August, the government said in Lok Sabha that so far, the ethanol blending programme has led to saving of around ₹2 lakh crore of foreign exchange and substituting of some 32 million tonnes of crude oil imports. Substituting 10 billion litres of petrol with ethanol would mean dispensing with a month of crude imports.

The government also told Parliament that while crude oil prices had gone up 70% during the war in West Asia, petrol prices at the pump had gone up by only 7 to 8% although under-recoveries had also increased. The OMCs procure ethanol at around ₹70 per litre for blending, compared with a pump price of around ₹105 per litre of petrol. The base price of petrol, which includes the cost of production, transportation and OMC margins, is typically 55-60% of the petrol pump price. On the surface, it appears that ethanol is not less costly than petrol but the issue is complex. Ethanol and petrol follow different costing and tax regimes, and it would be difficult to make an independent inference on whether ethanol has helped keep prices down, as the government claims.

THE GIST

- The government's target was to produce 10-11 billion litres of ethanol so 20% of petrol used in transport vehicles could come from ethanol produced in India, with the money being funnelled into the Indian economy.
- Vehicles built after this April 2023 were factory-engineered for E20, with ethanol-resistant elastomers, fluorinated fuel lines, upgraded pump seals and recalibrated engine control units.

Context [GS-III: Energy Security | Agriculture | Environment | Economy]

India has achieved 20% ethanol blending with petrol (E20) in 2025–26, five years ahead of the earlier 2030 target. The Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme aims to reduce crude-oil dependence, save foreign exchange, support farmers and lower emissions, but its long-term sustainability depends on balancing energy, food, water and consumer interests.

1. E20: Why India is Pursuing It

- **Energy security**: India imports around 88.5% of its crude oil; ethanol substitutes a part of petroleum demand and reduces exposure to global oil-price and geopolitical shocks.
- **Economic gains**: Since ESY 2014–15, ethanol blending has reportedly enabled ₹1.9 lakh crore+ foreign-exchange savings, substituted about 310 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil and generated ₹1.6 lakh crore+ in farmer payments.
- **Capacity expansion**: Ethanol production capacity increased from 421 crore litres in 2014 to nearly 2,000 crore litres in 2026, making the E20 mandate technically more feasible.

2. The Core Challenge: Food, Water & Fuel

- **Feedstock**: Ethanol is produced from sugarcane, maize, rice and other feedstocks. Greater dependence on food crops can create a food-versus-fuel trade-off.
- **Cropping pattern**: Attractive assured demand for maize can encourage farmers to shift land away from pulses and oilseeds, potentially increasing future import dependence for these essential crops.
- **Water**: Sugarcane is water-intensive; therefore, ethanol expansion needs to account for regional water stress and sustainable cropping patterns.
- **Diversification**: Second-generation (2G) ethanol, produced from agricultural residues and other non-food biomass, can reduce competition with food production.

3. Vehicle & Consumer Dimension

- **Compatibility**: Vehicles manufactured after April 2023 are designed for E20, but a large legacy E5/E10 fleet remains in use.
- **Mileage**: Ethanol has lower energy density than petrol; studies indicate around 2–6% lower fuel efficiency in some vehicles designed for E10.
- **Transition**: E20 therefore requires a gradual vehicle transition, transparent information on compatibility, mileage and maintenance, and adequate testing of older vehicles.

4. Economic & Global Dimension

- **Cost**: Ethanol is not automatically cheaper than petrol; for example, the government's procurement price for maize-based ethanol is about ₹71.86/litre, before taxes and logistics.
- **United States**: The United States has a large corn-ethanol industry, but India has clarified that it has made no commitment to import U.S. ethanol for fuel blending under ongoing trade talks; India's E20 requirement is intended to be met through domestic production.
- **Energy transition**: E20 should complement—not replace—electric mobility, public transport, green hydrogen and other low-carbon transport options.

5. Making E20 Sustainable

- **Feedstock diversification**: Expand 2G ethanol and agricultural-residue-based production rather than relying excessively on food crops.
- **Food–energy balance**: Ethanol policy must not undermine pulses, oilseeds, food availability or water security.
- **Consumer protection**: Ensure E20-compatible vehicles, transparent mileage information and safeguards for the legacy vehicle fleet.
- **Evidence-based expansion**: Future increases beyond E20 should follow scientific testing, feedstock availability and lifecycle environmental assessment, rather than blending targets alone.

Mains to Editorial Initiative — Day 6

What are the major benefits of E20 ethanol blending in India, and what challenges does it face?
(150 words | 10 marks)

भारत में E20 इथेनॉल मिश्रण के प्रमुख लाभ क्या हैं और इसके सामने कौन-सी प्रमुख चुनौतियाँ हैं?
(150 शब्द | 10 अंक)

Supreme Court clarifies scope of police custody under BNSS

Court held that Section 187(2) of BNSS enlarges the window during which police custody may be sought

R.K. Vij

The story so far:

The Supreme Court recently held in *The State of Andhra Pradesh vs Suda Suresh Veera Venkata Naga Raju* that Section 187(2) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), enlarges the window during which police custody may be sought by the investigating agency. Such custody, under the BNSS is now available in parts, though in aggregate not exceeding 15 days during the first 40 or 60 days of the total permissible period of detention, rather than being confined to the first 15 days of remand alone.

Case under consideration by the SC

In a case of custodial death in which the dead body of the deceased-victim remained untraced, the original hard disks of the CCTV system were yet to be discovered, and discoveries under the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) were imminent, the judicial magistrate granted eight days of police custody, and allowed the accused to nominate two advocates of his choice to be present during custody. Out of the two advocates, one was allowed to be present at any given point of time during investigation. The order stated that 'under no circumstances shall the period of police custody granted under this order be extended'.

While on appeal, the Andhra Pradesh High Court modified some conditions pertaining to the period of police custody and presence of an advocate throughout the probe. The State therefore challenged the above conditions in the Supreme Court on the premise that these directly impinged upon the rights of the investigating officer to conduct unhindered investigation.

The Supreme Court held that the apprehensions expressed by the investigating agency were justified and the statutory scheme under the BNSS which enlarges the window of police custody, must also be borne in mind. A magistrate or a court cannot place an absolute and non-extendable outer limit on custody, since such a limit forecloses recourse to Section 187(2) of the BNSS.

The Court therefore permitted 7 days of (additional) police custody so that the total period of police remand would not exceed 15 days.

Current law on police remand

Section 58 of the BNSS provides that any person arrested by the police without warrant cannot be detained for more than 24 hours, unless authorised by a magistrate under Section 187.

Section 187(2) of the BNSS provides that in case it appears to the investigating officer that the probe cannot be completed within 24 hours, and there are grounds for believing that the accusation is well founded, the magistrate may authorise the detention of the accused for a period not exceeding 15 days in the whole, or in parts, at any time during the initial 40 days or 60 days out of the detention period of 60 days or 90 days.

Section 187(3) provides that the magistrate may authorise the (judicial) detention of an accused person beyond the period of 15 days, if he is satisfied that adequate grounds exist for doing so, for a period exceeding - (i) 90 days, where the investigation relates to an offence punishable with death, imprisonment for life or imprisonment for a term of 10 years or more; (ii) 60 days, where the investigation relates to any other offence. Thus, in case the probe is not completed within the above stipulated time period, the accused person may be released, which is widely known as default bail.

The Supreme Court in the *Suda Suresh* case held that this legislative change was intended to meet situations where fresh facts, discoveries or leads may emerge during the course of investigation. Therefore, the window of police remand was enlarged beyond the initial 15 days, up to 40 days or 60 days of investigation.

Previously, Section 167 of the CrPC provided that the detention of an accused in police custody could not be granted beyond the initial 15 days in the whole. However, during this first period of 15 days the magistrate could alter the nature of the custody from judicial custody to police custody and vice versa.

On the presence of an advocate

Section 38 of the BNSS provides that 'when any person is arrested and interrogated by the police, he shall be entitled to meet an advocate of his choice during interrogation, though not throughout interrogation'.

The top court held that a plain reading of the provision makes it clear that it does not contemplate the continuous, ongoing physical presence of an advocate for the entirety of each interrogation session. The Court held that an unqualified entitlement to continuous presence, would travel beyond what Section 38 BNSS itself contemplates. The Court therefore modified the condition imposed by the High Court, and held that such a lawyer shall only be allowed to remain present within the site of interrogation where he can see the respondent-accused.

The Court also held that instead of uninterrupted videography of the transit of the accused between locations, the audio-visual recording of the actual interrogation, and of any proceedings of discovery or recovery undertaken with the accused, will satisfy the requirement.

(R.K. Vij is a former IPS officer.)

Context [GS-II: Judiciary | Criminal Justice | Fundamental Rights]

The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, which replaced the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, has altered the framework of arrest and remand. In **The State of Andhra Pradesh v. Suda Suresh Veera Venkata Naga Raju**, the Supreme Court clarified the scope of police custody and safeguards available to arrested persons.

1. Key BNSS Provisions

- **Section 58 — 24-hour safeguard**: An arrested person cannot ordinarily be detained beyond 24 hours, excluding journey time, without production before a Magistrate and further authorisation.
- **Section 187(2) — Police custody**: Police custody remains capped at 15 days in total, but it can be taken in parts during the first 40 days of a 60-day or 60 days of a 90-day detention period, depending on the offence.
- **Section 38 — Advocate**: An arrested person can meet an advocate of their choice during interrogation, but this does not mean the advocate has to remain continuously present throughout interrogation.

2. Supreme Court's Clarification

- **15-day limit unchanged:** The BNSS has not increased the maximum police custody; it has expanded the window for using the 15 days.
- **Separate spells permitted:** Police can seek custody at different stages when fresh evidence or investigative requirements justify it, subject to Magistrate approval.
- **Earlier position**: This differs from Central Bureau of Investigation v. Anupam J. Kulkarni (1992), under the earlier Code of Criminal Procedure, where police custody was confined to the first 15 days.

3. Constitutional Balance

- **Investigation vs liberty**: Greater investigative flexibility must operate within Article 21 (life and personal liberty) and Article 22 (protection against arbitrary arrest and detention).
- **Judicial oversight**: Magistrate authorisation remains the crucial safeguard against unnecessary or prolonged police custody.

India's first branded train set to run as 'Sprite' Tejas Express

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

India's first 'private, branded' train, launched by the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) between Lucknow and Delhi, will run as the 'Sprite' Tejas Express.

After IRCTC awarded advertisement rights through train branding of the Lucknow-Delhi-Lucknow Tejas Express to M/s Sprite for a period of six months, the North Eastern Railway was told that Train 82501/82502 Lucknow-Delhi-Lucknow IRCTC Tejas Express should be announced as the 'Sprite' Tejas Express, sources in the Railways said.

The advertisement through train branding was given by way of a Letter of Acceptance. The private train will be announced as 'Sprite' Tejas Express at originating and *en route* stations on both sides of the journey, the sources told *The Hindu* on Wednesday. The country's first private train was flagged off by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on December 3, 2021.

The much publicised IRCTC's own fully air-conditioned superfast train is equipped with modern facilities. It has an extensive on-board food/beverage and infotainment services, the IRCTC said.

Group booking is allowed in the train where passengers travelling in groups to attend corporate meetings, marriages, social events, etc., could book an entire AC Chair Car coach having 78 seats.

"This is the first time that a train is being named after a brand. Though the Lucknow-Delhi-Lucknow Tejas Express is a private train, IRCTC pays Indian Railways hauling charges, which includes the use of its infrastructure, such as tracks, railway stations, etc.," a senior Railways official said.

Context [GS-III: Infrastructure | Railways | Public–Private Participation]

The Lucknow–Delhi–Lucknow Tejas Express will be branded as 'Sprite Tejas Express' after the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) awarded six-month train-branding rights to Sprite. This is commercial branding, not privatisation of the train.

Key Points

- **First branded train**: Train No. 82501/82502 will carry the Sprite brand at originating and en-route stations, making it the first Indian train to be named after a commercial brand.
- **Non-fare revenue**: The initiative allows IRCTC to generate additional revenue through advertising and branding, reducing dependence on passenger fares.
- **Role of Indian Railways**: The train continues to use Indian Railways' tracks, stations and other infrastructure, for which IRCTC pays the applicable hauling charges.
- **Significance**: It represents greater commercialisation and non-fare revenue generation within the railway sector while keeping railway infrastructure under Indian Railways.

Germany is interested in buying green hydrogen from India, says Chargé D' Affaires

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Germany is interested to purchase green hydrogen from India as well as expand their engagement for renewable energy, Georg Enzweiler, Chargé D' Affaires of the German Mission in India told *The Hindu*.

"India has the resources to produce green hydrogen which we could buy to cover our energy needs back home and not be dependent on procuring fossil fuels," he explained.

According to him, renewable energy partnership between the countries also offers quality business prospects.

Georg Enzweiler

Interacting on the sidelines of the eleventh edition of 'Young Voices for Sustainable Development' summit, Mr. Enzweiler explained India has "fantastic resources" for producing renewable energy - both solar and wind, and a "dynamic forward-looking innovative business framework".

He added, Germany would therefore look to bring its technological and industrial expertise as part of the engagement in the renewable energy space.

"India can [then look to] export the energy produced for which it could get good Euros. That could make it an attractive business model as well," he stated.

In response to a query about indigenising the German technology in the long run amid the Indian government's push for acquiring overall self-reliance, the German Chargé D' Affaires affirmed that it would be viable, especially with the European Union-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in sight.

"We expect a big push on energy and renewables but also on the wider economy for both Europe and India [with the FTA]," he stated.

Separately, Mr. Enzweiler stated he was hopeful that the FTA would enter into force early 2027 - as is presently being widely predicted.

India and the EU successfully concluded negotiations about the "mother of all deals" FTA late January. It is to see tariffs on 99.5% of items exported by India dropping to nil once it comes into effect.

Elaborating on the sectors of interest for Germany, Mr. Enzweiler said, "For us, automobile industry is very important, [alongside] machinery and chemical industry."

Context [GS-III: Energy Security | Environment | International Trade]

Germany has expressed interest in importing Green Hydrogen from India, highlighting India's potential to use its renewable-energy resources for domestic decarbonisation and future clean-energy exports.

1. Green Hydrogen

- Green Hydrogen: Hydrogen produced by electrolysis of water using renewable electricity such as solar and wind, with very low emissions.
- Uses: Important for hard-to-abate sectors such as steel, fertilisers, chemicals, shipping and heavy industry.

2. National Green Hydrogen Mission

- Launched in 2023 with an outlay of ₹19,744 crore to develop India's domestic Green Hydrogen ecosystem and make India a global production, use and export hub.
- 2030 targets: 5 million metric tonnes (MMT) → target for annual Green Hydrogen production by 2030 and around 125 GW renewable-energy capacity, alongside investment, employment and emission-reduction gains.
- Domestic focus: Reduce fossil-fuel imports, decarbonise industries and create domestic demand; exports are an additional opportunity.

3. India–Germany Opportunity

- India: Renewable-energy potential and expanding Green Hydrogen production capacity.
- Germany: Industrial demand for clean hydrogen and technological expertise.
- Cooperation can therefore combine Indian renewable resources with German technology, investment and market demand.

4. Key Challenges

- High production cost, renewable-power requirements and water availability.
- Need for storage, transport, port infrastructure and international certification standards.