

Important Issues of the Day

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- **The Union Home Ministry on Monday released the country's first-ever anti-terror policy, emphasising that other than terror sponsored from across the border, "criminal hackers and nation states continue to target India through cyber-attacks". The policy — titled PRAHAAR — has been uploaded on the Ministry's website.**
 - **It states that India faces terrorist threats on all three fronts — water, land and air — and that capacities have been developed to protect critical sectors of the economy,**
 - **including power, railways, aviation, ports, defence, space and atomic energy, from both state and non-state actors.**
- The policy named "PRAHAAR, uploaded on MHA's website, stated that "India does not link terrorism to any specific religion, ethnicity, nationality or civilisation."**

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- **It further said that for propaganda, communication, funding and guiding terror attacks, these terror groups use social media platforms as well as 'instant messaging applications' and technological advancements such as encryption, the dark web, crypto wallets, etc. Have allowed these groups to operate anonymously. As a way forward, the policy suggested that to make appropriate cases against the**
- **perpetrators of acts of terrorism, there is a need to associate legal experts at every stage of investigation, right from the registration of FIR to its culmination in prosecution.**

The quiet crisis of adolescent mental health in India

Page No. 8, GS 2

The passing of three adolescent girls in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, earlier this month, is a case that deeply unsettled the public. The intense media attention reflects collective grief – but treating this tragedy as an isolated incident risks ignoring a larger reality. India faces a growing, largely neglected crisis in child and adolescent mental health, rooted in early vulnerability and worsened by an unregulated digital environment.

Mental health challenges are no longer limited to adults or older teens. Clinicians increasingly see anxiety, depression, attention disorders and behavioural issues in much younger children. Yet, many families, schools and even parts of the health-care system still view these as “adult issues”. In fact, emotional and behavioural disorders can appear as early as four or five years of age. Early trauma, neglect and chronic stress can disrupt emotional and cognitive development, often resurfacing with greater intensity during adolescence.

These conditions have also grown more complex. Where children showed a single diagnosis, comorbidities are now common – attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) with anxiety, depression with compulsive digital use, learning difficulties with emotional distress—making early recognition crucial.

The extent of the problem

Population-level data mirrors what clinicians observe daily. Findings from the National Mental Health Survey and subsequent studies suggest that between seven per cent to 10% of Indian adolescents have diagnosable mental health conditions, and five per cent to seven per cent of school-aged children have ADHD. Yet early signs – withdrawal, impulsivity, sudden behavioural changes – are often dismissed, leading to academic, social and long-term emotional harm. India faces an acute shortage of trained child and adolescent mental health professionals. With fewer than 10,000 psychiatrists for a population exceeding 1.4 billion—and only a small fraction specialising in child mental health – the gap is stark. Shortages of clinical psychologists, child psychologists and psychiatric social workers further strain an already fragile system. Families are left to navigate fragmented care largely on their own.

Childhood vulnerability has been amplified by a transformed digital landscape. The rise in mental health concerns parallels the spread of smartphones and low-priced Internet data, now used by over 800 million Indians—many of them children. The COVID-19 pandemic further embedded screens into daily life including education, recreation and social interaction.

With schoolwork, communication and entertainment all on the same device, boundaries have blurred. Internet addiction which is marked by loss of control, irritability, sleep disruption and social withdrawal, is now a routine clinical concern.

As early as 2019, the World Health



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Families, schools and policymakers must prioritise youth mental wellbeing

Organization issued guidelines and had cautioned against excessive screen exposure among children and adolescents, highlighting its adverse effects on sleep, attention, emotional regulation and overall wellbeing. These recommendations predated the pandemic. It is important to understand that the excessive screen use does not cause neurodevelopmental conditions such as ADHD or autism spectrum disorders. However, it can significantly exacerbate symptoms, delay diagnosis and displace the human interaction essential for healthy brain development during periods of heightened neuroplasticity. In vulnerable children, this displacement can have lasting consequences.

Against this backdrop, parents and families have to assume a central role. They are not merely caregivers but a child's first mental health buffer – as the earliest observers of emotional change and the most consistent source of psychological safety. Trauma-informed parenting, which recognises how stress, loss and adversity shape behaviour, must extend beyond clinical settings into everyday life. Listening without judgement, noticing changes in sleep, mood or social engagement, and seeking help early can dramatically alter outcomes.

Support groups are proven to further strengthen this protective environment. Parent support groups reduce isolation, normalise help-seeking and enable shared learning. Adolescent peer-support groups provide safe spaces for emotional expression, resilience-building and the development of coping skills. Evidence consistently shows that such collective, community-based approaches are more effective than isolated, clinic-centred interventions.

Schools are a weak link

Schools, however, remain a critical weak link. Academic performance continues to dominate institutional priorities, often at the expense of emotional wellbeing. Examinations, rankings and competition define school culture, while structured attention to emotional regulation, stress management and happiness remains limited. This imbalance is neither benign nor sustainable. Mental wellbeing is foundational to learning, creativity and long-term productivity; without it, academic success is fragile and transient.

A further challenge lies in the gap between evidence and practice. India's research base on child and adolescent mental health, digital behaviour and early intervention has grown steadily. Yet, translation into routine care remains slow. Paediatricians – often the first point of contact for families – must routinely inquire about emotional wellbeing, sleep patterns, screen use and peer relationships, and not just physical growth. Teachers, counsellors, psychologists and all professionals working with children need structured training to identify early signs of mental health problems and Internet-related harms. Stigma continues to delay care, with

families often seeking help only during crises.

In today's context, child and adolescent mental health is intricately linked to social media and Internet use. These concerns were explicitly acknowledged in India's Economic Survey 2025-26, released in January 2026, which highlighted rising mental health challenges among young people and proposed a range of preventive strategies. Several Indian States, drawing on precedents in Australia, France and South Korea, are considering regulatory steps to limit adolescent social media use. This is an idea whose time has come, provided it is implemented thoughtfully, alongside education and support rather than punitive controls.

Actions to implement

Policy and programmatic action must now align with reality. India can strengthen existing platforms – the National Mental Health Programme, school health services under Ayushman Bharat – health and wellness centre initiative, and tele-mental health initiatives – by introducing routine school-based screening, training teachers and frontline workers in early identification of child and adolescent mental health issues, and reinforcing referral pathways. Earmarked funding for child mental health initiatives, clear guidelines on digital use in schools, and affordable community-based counselling, especially for low- and middle-income families, are urgently needed.

Implementation, however, faces practical hurdles. Stigma surrounding mental health remains pervasive, and child psychiatry carries an even heavier burden of fear and misunderstanding. Concerns about labelling, judgement and long-term consequences often delay help-seeking until distress escalates into crisis. Normalising conversations around mental health within families, schools and health-care systems is not optional; it is a public health imperative.

The Ghaziabad case must not remain just a headline. Preventing similar tragedies requires coordinated action between schools, paediatricians, mental health professionals, and communities. Even modest, timely interventions can change developmental paths. While telepsychiatry and digital platforms have expanded reach, access remains unequal; extending these services to underserved families, alongside investment in training and interdisciplinary care, must be a priority.

Parents need guidance on early warning signs and healthy digital use. Schools should make mental wellbeing part of daily learning. Paediatricians must screen for emotional and behavioural issues, and community support networks strengthened. Policy must treat mental health as central to child development.

Equally important is a need to shift in what we value as outcomes. Childhood should foster wellbeing, resilience, and connection—not just competitiveness. Neglecting it now will carry far higher social and economic costs later.

- **The passing of three adolescent girls in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, earlier this month, is a case that deeply unsettled the public. The intense media attention reflects collective grief — but treating this tragedy as an isolated incident risks ignoring a larger reality.**
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- **rooted in early vulnerability and worsened by an unregulated digital environment.**
- **Mental health challenges are no longer limited to adults or old teens. Clinicians increasingly see anxiety, depression, attention disorders and behavioural issues in much younger children.**
- **Yet, many families, schools and even parts of the health-care system still view these as “adult issues”.**

- **In fact, emotional and behavioural disorders can appear as early as four or five years of age. Early trauma, neglect and chronic stress can disrupt emotional and cognitive development, often resurfacing with greater intensity during adolescence.**
- **Findings from the National Mental Health Survey and subsequent studies suggest that between seven per cent to 10% of Indian adolescents have diagnosable mental health conditions, and five per cent to seven per cent of school-aged children have ADHD.**
- **Yet early signs — withdrawal, impulsivity, sudden behavioural changes — are often dismissed, leading to academic, social and long-term emotional harm. India faces an acute shortage of trained child and adolescent mental health professionals.**
- **With fewer than 10,000 psychiatrists for a population exceeding 1.4 billion—and only a small fraction specialising in child mental health — the gap is stark.**

- **Childhood vulnerability has been amplified by a transformed digital landscape. The rise in mental health concerns parallels the spread of smartphones and low-priced Internet data, now used by over 800 million Indians—many of them children. The COVID-19 pandemic further embedded screens into daily life including education, recreation and social interaction.**
- **With schoolwork, communication and entertainment all on the same device, boundaries have blurred. Internet addiction which is marked by loss of control, irritability, sleep disruption and social withdrawal, is now a routine clinical concern. As early as 2019, the World Health Organization issued guidelines and had cautioned against excessive screen exposure among children and adolescents, highlighting its adverse effects on sleep, attention, emotional regulation and overall wellbeing. These recommendations predated the pandemic.**

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AI for all

The AI Impact Summit was a sign of things to come in India

The attendance at the AI Impact Summit, in New Delhi, showed an extreme enthusiasm for Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies by digitally connected Indians. While statistics shared by AI firms have frequently cited India as the biggest user base outside the U.S., the crowds over the week were the biggest indicator of just how keen many Indians are to adopt this technology. At its core, the summit was a continuation of a series of annual multilateral discussions on AI, and 89 countries have signed a declaration laying out a voluntary set of commitments to share knowledge on AI democratisation. The summit's context comes with foreboding challenges for India: namely, deploying and diffusing a technology whose capital and infrastructure reside abroad, and finding a place in the global AI ecosystem that will place Indians well in the economic transformations that this technology's adoption promises. India's data centre capacity is growing healthily, but the AI moment calls for further momentum, a difficult ask when the costs of graphics processing units (GPUs) driving AI push up the cost of domestic deployment so much, not to mention the additional electrical capacity that must be built. A national strategy that relies overwhelmingly on becoming a hub for the deployment of models, with less emphasis on their training and finetuning, could pose risks; after all, with fewer labour costs, the advantage that India has will be smaller than in the ITeS era.

On the international cooperation front, it is disappointing that India has so eagerly enabled the U.S.'s hands-off impulses for AI. This is a technology with enormous scope for economic and social disruption. Countries must use the annual AI forum to collectively build tools and safety standards that can exercise actual leverage over how LLMs diffuse throughout society. Leadership of the Global South entails empowering countries that are individually vulnerable to collateral damage in an era of great power rivalries. AI is increasingly defining that era more and more acutely. Consensus at all costs is not the appropriate approach. As a country of enthusiastic AI adopters, India has the leverage and capacity to articulate an optimistic but prudent way forward for AI governance, and the summit declaration showed no signs of this power. The summit's central pillar remains an important one: for AI to be a net good, its capabilities need to be democratised. As India closes its digital divide, there cannot be an inference gap. If the summit made anything clear, it was that India is as capable of organically contributing to worldwide growth as it has the capacity, should it choose, to be a force to shape its orderly growth.

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Stick together

India and Brazil have realised the importance of their groupings

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's India visit last week sent important messages for both India-Brazil ties, and for solidarity in the developing world, as two Global South powers focused on global governance and leadership. After his talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India and Brazil agreed to try and double trade to \$30 billion by 2030, and signed agreements on critical minerals, steel mining, and digital cooperation to diversify beyond China-led supply chains. Mr. Lula, along with French President Emmanuel Macron, was among about 20 leaders at India's AI Impact Summit and was later accorded a state visit. The 80-year-old Brazilian President's presence was important, as he faces elections later this year, which may make it difficult for him to attend India's BRICS summit if it coincides with his campaigning for a fourth term. It also came amidst fresh turmoil over U.S.-imposed trade tariffs, after the American Supreme Court struck down U.S. President Donald Trump's rationale for the reciprocal tariffs. India and Brazil were both the highest taxed countries by the U.S. – 50% tariffs each – and both faced further possible tariffs over BRICS ties, Iran trade, and Russian oil imports. India and Brazil are also key members of the BRICS grouping of developing nations, the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA), G-4 with Germany and South Africa on UNSC reform, and co-founders of

BRICS grouping of developing nations, the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA), G-4 with Germany and South Africa on UNSC reform, and co-founders of the biofuel alliance for alternative energy; each of these has faced challenges from Mr. Trump's policies on trade, territorial sovereignty, multilateralism and the UN, and fossil fuels. Amid such uncertainty, Mr. Modi and Mr. Lula reaffirmed their commitment to protecting the multilateral order.

Before leaving India, Mr. Lula, who is set to visit Washington next month, did not mince words while speaking to journalists about the challenges posed by the U.S. government. As a former trade union leader, he said he believed that the only way of tackling geopolitical uncertainty unleashed by the U.S. was for countries to “unionise”, rather than cutting deals individually with Washington, which leave smaller nations at a disadvantage. The words are particularly important for both Delhi and Brasilia, as both have negotiated with the Trump administration on tariffs, but have not so far signed trade deals with the U.S. The U.S. court ruling offers an opportunity to reset the terms of the agreements, and it is significant that New Delhi has postponed a meeting of trade negotiators this week to give the U.S. and India time to assess the ruling. India and Brazil, and their developing world partners, should coordinate the next steps and stay engaged with Washington. Mr. Lula's warning is clear: it is easy to break a single stick, but far more difficult to do so if the sticks are bundled tightly together.

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Q. With reference to 'Global Biofuels Alliance' consider the following statements:

1. The alliance will be established by US, Australia and South Africa.
2. The aim of the alliance is to facilitate cooperation and intensify the use of sustainable biofuels.
3. The alliance will work in collaboration with and complement the relevant existing regional and international agencies as well as initiatives in the bioenergy..

Which of the statements given above are correct? [A] 1 and 2 only

[B] 2 and 3 only

[C] 1 and 3 only

[D] 1, 2 and 3

India's energy shift through the green ammonia route

At the inaugural session of the India Energy Week (IEW), in January 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi positioned India's ambitions at the centrestage of the global energy discourse, highlighting investment opportunities worth \$500 billion across the sector. As India raises its ambition from energy security to energy independence, the affordability of clean energy such as green hydrogen and its derivatives is critical to the long-term competitiveness of India's energy transition. But from fertilizers to clean energy and marine fuel, there are now green ammonia applications which are wide-ranging. Green ammonia – produced by combining nitrogen with green hydrogen – is currently leading in the adoption of green hydrogen, with its strategic adoption advanced across regions such as the European Union (EU), India and South Korea.

Aggregated procurement mechanisms are starting to lay the foundation for a global green ammonia market. Some noteworthy examples include H2Global's tender of green ammonia under the EU's hydrogen import strategy, South Korea's Clean Hydrogen Portfolio Standard (CHPS) tender for clean ammonia procurement as a bulk fuel, and the recent tender concluded by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) under the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) programme of India's National Green Hydrogen Mission.

Green ammonia auction

Compared to these global procurement practices, India's green ammonia auction under SECI demonstrates broader market participation, attracting 15 bidders and resulting in seven unique successful awardees. Under the SIGHT programme, SECI floated a tender in June 2024 for an aggregated demand of up to 724,000 tonnes of green ammonia annually across 13 fertilizer plants in India. These tenders concluded

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The country's green ammonia auction model has the potential to redefine global standards for clean energy adoption

in August 2025, and offered a 10-year, fixed-price offtake agreements to successful bidders. This clarity in price and offtake provided producers with the market certainty required for investment. The auctions established a significant breakthrough in cost-competitive green ammonia procurement, setting new global benchmarks, almost 40%-50% less than the prices from the H2Global auction

The tender process faced multiple extensions and revisions, primarily to resolve concerns around risk allocation, payment security, and clarity on offtake and pricing conditions, raised by both project developers and offtakers. These refinements successfully addressed concerns, leading to a balanced win-win framework for all stakeholders.

In this auction, seven bidders secured a total of 13 delivery contracts for green ammonia. Notably, one company won six contracts for 3,70,000 tonnes/year. These contracts include production subsidies of ₹8.82 a kilogramme, ₹7.06 a kg, and ₹5.3 a kg for the first three years and a 10-year fixed price supply agreement to existing fertilizer manufacturers in India.

The discovered prices of green ammonia across these tenders range from ₹49.75 and ₹64.74/kg (\$572 and \$744 a tonne). In India, the grey ammonia price is as high as \$515 a tonne. When factoring in the newly discovered price of green ammonia, supported by longer-term contracts, the cost gap has significantly narrowed.

On delivery and transportation

Notably, a standout feature of SECI's tender is the pre-identification of delivery points, as most fertilizer plants where the green ammonia is to be delivered are located near coastal areas, enabling the transportation of green ammonia through shipping as well. The contracted volumes of green ammonia contribute to approximately 30%

of the total ammonia being imported, offering price predictability and greater insulation from global gas market volatility, currency risks and geopolitical pressures. In locations where grey ammonia costs are higher, green ammonia procurement increases its appeal for scale-up.

Propelling the momentum

India's approach is increasingly shaping the clean ammonia landscape worldwide, owing to its combination of low renewable energy costs, large-scale logistics, robust contract design and targeted incentives. As more countries seek reliable clean ammonia imports to decarbonise industry, power and transport, India's successful auction model is well placed to shape emerging global market structures and accelerate adoption at scale.

However, sustaining the momentum created by India's green ammonia auctions will require coordinated and sustained action from policymakers, project developers and financiers. Developers must focus on strong technical and financial due diligence, integrate hybrid renewable systems with storage, and adopt transparent monitoring frameworks to ensure long-term operational viability. Policymakers, in turn, need to provide stable and harmonised regulations on grid access, banking and incentives, while strengthening safety standards and aligning certification frameworks with evolving global norms.

Long-tenor, blended finance facilities, backed by extended offtake agreements and dedicated risk-mitigation instruments, can further enhance project bankability and crowd in private capital. Together, these measures can reinforce investor confidence, accelerate scale-up, and firmly position India not just as a participant but also as a global leader in clean ammonia markets.

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- **of clean energy such as green hydrogen and its derivatives is critical to the long-term competitiveness of India's energy transition. But from fertilizers to clean energy and marine fuel, there are now green ammonia applications which are wide-ranging. Green ammonia — produced by combining nitrogen**
- **with green hydrogen — is currently leading in the adoption of green hydrogen, with its strategic adoption advanced across regions such as the European Union (EU), India and South Korea.**

- The fuel can be a game-changer for the energy security of India, which imports 85% of its oil and 53% of gas requirements. To promote clean fuels, India is considering
- making it mandatory for fertilizer plants and oil refineries to purchase green hydrogen. Method of Production: It is produced by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using an electrolyzer powered by renewable energy sources such as wind and solar. Uses: Chemical industry: Manufacturing ammonia and fertilizers
- Petrochemical industry: Production of petroleum products. Furthermore, it is starting to be used in the steel industry, a sector which is under considerable pressure in Europe because of its polluting effect.

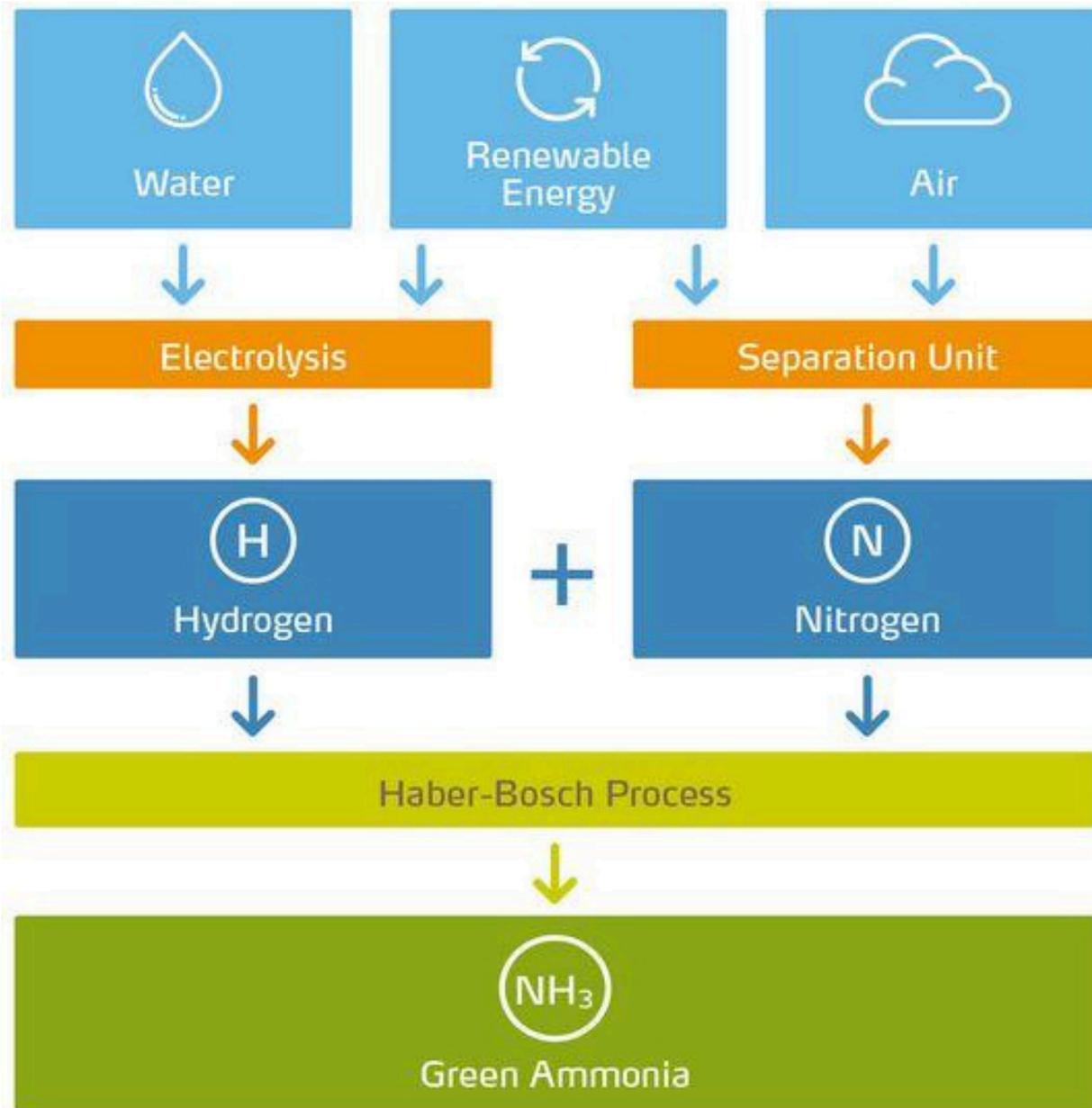
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Ammonia is a chemical which is used mainly in the manufacture of nitrogenous fertilizers, like urea and ammonium nitrate, but can be put to other uses too, such as to run engines. Green ammonia production is where the process of making ammonia is 100% renewable and carbon-free.

Method of Production:

- **It is produced by using hydrogen from water electrolysis and nitrogen separated from the air. These are then fed into the Haber process (Also known as Haber-Bosch), all powered by sustainable electricity.**
- **Green ammonia production makes use of renewable energy sources such as hydro-electric,**
- **solar power or wind turbines.**

In the Haber process, hydrogen and nitrogen are reacted together at high temperatures and pressures to produce ammonia, NH₃.



Dokdo Islands



- **The territory is a cluster of small, rocky outcroppings located in the Sea of Japan (referred to as the East Seaby South Korea).**

Composition: It consists of two main volcanic islets—Dongdo (East Island) and Seodo (West Island)—along with roughly 30 to 90 smaller rocks and reefs.

Geographical Position:

- **The islands lie roughly equidistant between the two nations but are physically closer to the South Korean island of Ulleungdo (approx. 87 km) than to Japan’s Oki Islands (approx. 157 km).**
- **Ancient Records: SouthKoreatraces its claimback to the6th-century SillaKingdom, citingvarious historical maps and documents (like the Sejong Sillok Jiriji) that describe the islets as part of Korean territory.**

- **1905 Annexation:** Japan officially incorporated the islands into Shimane Prefecture in 1905, declaring them terra nullius (nobody's land) during the Russo-Japanese War. South Korea views this as an illegal act of colonial aggression.
- **Post-WWII (1945-1954):** Following Japan's defeat in 1945, the islands were placed under Allied control. In 1954, South Korea established a permanent coast guard presence on the islands, effectively regaining control after the end of Japanese colonial rule.

Features:

- **Terrain:** Volcanic rocks formed in the Cenozoic era. They feature steep cliffs, numerous sea caves, and a harsh, humid climate.
- **De Facto Control:** South Korea maintains effective control over the islands, with a small detachment of police, lighthouse keepers, and a handful of residents.

Legal Stance: South Korea refuses to take the matter to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), arguing that there is no dispute to settle as the islands are an integral part of their sovereign territory. Japan continues to claim the islands as an inherent part of its territory, hosting Takeshima Day every February 22nd.