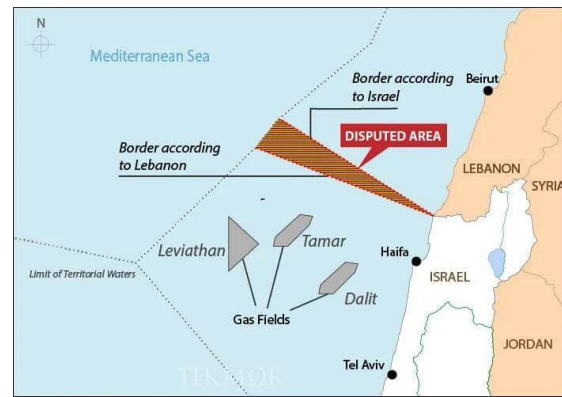


Israel and Lebanon maritime border

- Israel and Lebanon have officially approved a historic United States-brokered agreement laying out their maritime boundary for the first time, which opens up the possibility for both countries to conduct offshore energy exploration.
- With the Lebanese economy in complete collapse, Beirut sees the demarcation of the maritime border along Line 23 as an opportunity to unlock foreign investment and lift the country out of its spiralling economic crisis.
- Under the terms of the deal, Israel received full rights to explore the Karish field, which is estimated to have natural gas reserves of 2.4 trillion cubic feet (68 billion cubic metres).
- In turn, Lebanon received full rights in the Qana field but agreed to allow Israel a share of royalties through a side agreement with the French company Total Energies for the section of the field that extends beyond the agreed maritime border.



The agreed maritime border between Lebanon and Israel



THE HINDU

Disinformation law of Turkey

- On October 14, Turkey's parliament adopted the much-critiqued 'disinformation law' that accords jail terms of up to three years to social media users and journalists for spreading 'disinformation.'

What does the law entail?

- Cumulatively known as 'the disinformation law', it comprises about 40 articles that would amend about 23 different laws.
- Of the 40, the most contentious is Article 29. It designates it an offense

to publicly disseminate misleading information about the country's internal and external security, public order, and general well-being for the purpose of causing fear or panic among the populace.

- The article introduces a jail term between one and three years for any violation with the extension of an additional half of the initially stipulated term if the actions are done in anonymity.
- Critics, including the Venice Commission which is the advisory body to the Council of Europe on constitutional matters, have pointed to the unclear interpretation of certain crucial terminologies, especially 'disinformation'.
- Turkey already has an unimpressive record pertaining to press freedom. It ranks 149 out of 180 on the Press Freedom Index (2022).

THE HINDU

Aruna Jagadeesan Commission of Inquiry (Col) report and Sterlite copper

- On October 18, the Tamil Nadu government tabled the final report of the Justice Aruna Jagadeesan Commission of Inquiry (Col) in the Assembly.

- The Col was formed to inquire into the police firing that resulted in the killing of 13 people in May 2018 in Thoothukudi during the protests against the Sterlite Copper plant.
- Contrary to the assertions by the then Tamil Nadu government, particularly of the police that the firing was done inevitably to control the violence started by the protesters, the Col squarely placed the blame on the police and revenue officials by terming the firing as disproportionate and largely unprovoked.
- Terming the incident, a "big black mark" on the State's history, Mr. Stalin, while speaking in the Assembly on the report, said that the compensation to the families of the deceased will be increased by another ₹5 lakh
- Sterlite operated the largest copper smelter plant in India, in Thoothukudi from 1998 to 2018.
- The plant was not operational from March 2018 and was shut down by the Government of Tamil Nadu on 28 May 2018 after protests from locals.
- Sterlite Copper of Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu has become a moral issue after the police firing on protesters resulted in the deaths of 13 people in May 2018.

- Sterlite's product, copper, is a strategic metal. Important applications are energy, electrical equipment, and electronics.
- Copper production provides strategic balance and price stability.
- The shuttering of the Sterlite plant quickly made India, a copper exporter, an importer.
- However, distrust of Sterlite is so much that many people now credit good rains to the shuttering of the plant.
- The community complains that Sterlite did not employ enough local people and did not give enough contracts for local businessmen.
- Therefore, the corporate group needs to act responsibly and take the people along with it if it wants to conduct its business.

What was the impact of the closure of the plant?

- India has shifted from being a large net exporter of refined copper to now being a net importer of copper during the last four years since the shutdown of the Tuticorin plant.
- According to data provided by Care Ratings, India is now importing copper at a historically higher price close to around \$9600 per tonne which is around 50% higher as compared to the average prices of copper when India was a net exporter of the same (around \$6500 per tonne).

- Sterlite was a major domestic supplier of phosphoric acid with a capacity of 2, 20,000 metric tonnes, which is a key raw material for fertilizer manufacturing companies.
- These fertilizer units were impacted due to the stoppage of supplies and had to start importing.
- While operational, it was the largest supplier of sulphuric acid (used in detergent and chemical industries) in Tamil Nadu, and had a 95% share of the market.

THE HINDU

Evangelical environmentalism and TN Government steps

- Tamil Nadu has struck out clearly for a future that would be climate conscious, greener, with a series of announcements this year in the form of government orders and via the Budget.
- Apart from getting the Ramsar Site declaration for a record number of ecological zones as a well-planned and implemented initiative, it has also declared its intention to create green parks in 100 villages that would cater to local requirements too.

- Also proposed are an elephant reserve at Agasthiyarmalai in the south, a dugong conservation park in the Palk Bay, a new bird sanctuary at Tiruppur, and establishing India's first-ever wildlife sanctuary for the slender loris in Dindigul and Karur district.
- All modern states are beset by challenges in the sectors of energy transition, mobility transition, and agricultural transition. It is crucial to building capacity capable of fashioning local solutions, and ensure that the announcements are all implemented, in a time-bound manner.

- **THE HINDU**

Evangelical environmentalism

- Evangelical environmentalism is an environmental movement in the United States in which some Evangelical Christians have emphasized biblical mandates concerning humanity's role as steward and subsequent responsibility for the care taking of Creation.
- While the movement has focused on different environmental issues, it is best known for its focus of addressing climate action from a biblically (The meaning of BIBLICAL is

of, relating to, or being in accord with the Bible)-grounded theological perspective.

- Some Evangelical groups have allied with environmentalists in teaching knowledge and developing awareness of global warming.
- The National Association of Evangelicals, a non-profit organization, is working to encourage lawmakers to pass a law that would put restrictions on carbon emissions in the United States.

THE HINDU
