CURRENT AFFAIRS — 20 OCTOBER 2026

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Tuesday, 20 October 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Bihar + National • BPSC Prelims & Mains digest

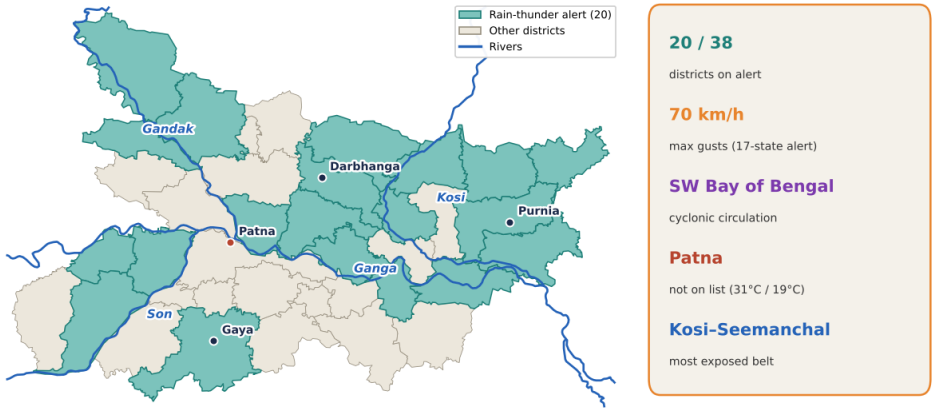
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TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Bihar MLC polls: **8 seats** (4 graduates' + 4 teachers'), polling **23 Oct**, counting **27 Oct**.
- **164** nominations were filed for the 8 Bihar Council seats; **3 FIRs** lodged for poll-code violation in Mokama.
- IMD-based alert: rain, thunder & gusty winds (up to **70 km/h**) in **20 Bihar districts** on Dussehra.
- Ethanol tender 2026-27: **~11 billion litres** for **E20**; sugarcane-juice & B-heavy routes barred.
- Maize-ethanol price cut **₹71.86 → ₹68.86/L**; Bihar maize output **66.03 lakh MT** (2024-25).
- Patna Metro: CM sets **2028** deadline; Mithapur–Khemni Chak (**3.1 km**) by **June 2027**.
- Bihar Green Hydrogen Policy 2026: **1 lakh tonnes/yr by 2031**, nodal agency **BREDA**.
- **India–NZ FTA** in force from **20 Oct 2026**; **100%** Indian exports duty-free; dairy excluded.
- SC (15 Oct): internet access is a right of **children too**; **National Hash & URL Database** for CSEAM.
- CCEA clears **60.72%** IDBI Bank stake sale to a **Fairfax** unit for **₹52,878 crore**.

SECTION A — BIHAR SPECIAL state schemes • policy • administration • state economy

BIHAR: DUSSEHRA RAIN-THUNDER ALERT (20 OCT 2026)



Bihar Legislative Council polls on 23 Oct: NDA firms up strategy for 8 graduates' & teachers' seats

[BIHAR] **BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Polity & Bihar)**

Syllabus Linkage	Mains GS-II — State Legislature, elections, Bihar polity. Prelims — **Art. 169/171**, composition of Legislative Councils.
Context	On **Vijayadashami (20 Oct)** the NDA held a joint meeting in Patna to finalise its campaign for the biennial polls to **8 seats** of the **Bihar Vidhan Parishad**, whose members' terms end on **16 Nov 2026**.
Key Facts	■ Seats: **Patna, Darbhanga, Tirhut, Kosi Graduates'** + **Patna, Darbhanga, Tirhut, Saran Teachers'**. ■ Schedule: notification **29 Sep**; polling **23 Oct (8 am–4 pm)**; counting **27 Oct**; process ends **31 Oct**. ■ **164** nominations filed (**98** graduates', **66** teachers'); **BJP 4** + **JD(U) 4** seats within NDA. ■ Police lodged **3 FIRs** in the Mokama area over an alleged **Model Code** breach during a candidate's roadshow.
Way Fwd	Strict MCC enforcement and higher enrolment of eligible graduates/teachers would make these special constituencies more representative.
Concept	**Art. 171**: Council size ≤ **1/3** of Assembly (min **40**); **1/12** elected by graduates (3 yrs standing), **1/12** by teachers, **1/3** by local bodies, **1/3** by MLAs, **1/6** nominated. Bihar Council = **75** members; voting by **STV**.

Dussehra weather alert: rain, thunder and gusty winds forecast for 20 Bihar districts

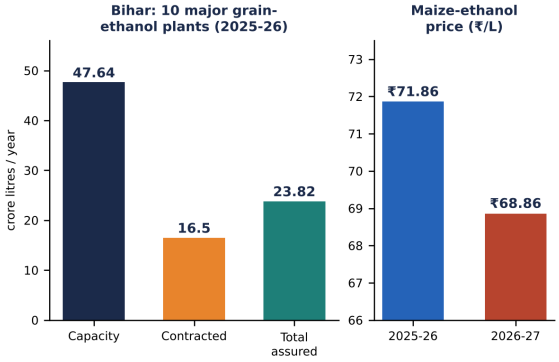
[ENVIRONMENT] **BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Bihar Geography)**

Syllabus Linkage	Mains GS-II — **Bihar geography**, climate, disaster management. Prelims — weather systems, lightning safety in Bihar.
Context	A **cyclonic circulation over the south-west Bay of Bengal** has pushed moisture north, bringing a festival-day alert for rain, thunderstorms and lightning across north, east and south-west Bihar, with heavy Durga Puja crowds outdoors.
Key Facts	■ **20 districts** on alert incl. **Purnia, Kishanganj, Araria, Katihar, Supaul, Saharsa, Darbhanga, Madhubani, Gaya, Rohtas, Buxar**. ■ Winds up to **70 km/h** in parts of the 17 states under the national alert; **Patna** not on the list (31°C / 19°C). ■ Kosi–Seemanchal belt is most exposed — the region with Bihar's highest **lightning** and **flood** vulnerability.
Way Fwd	Push alerts via the state's **Indravajra** lightning app, crowd-safety SOPs at pandals and quick-response teams in Kosi–Seemanchal.
Concept	**Lightning** is among Bihar's deadliest hazards; the state pays **₹4 lakh** ex-gratia per death. October rain in Bihar is linked to **post-monsoon (retreating monsoon)** systems from the Bay of Bengal.

Ethanol tender 2026-27 bars sugar routes, trims maize-ethanol price — what it means for Bihar's maize belt

[ECONOMY] BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Bihar Economy)

Syllabus Linkage	Mains GS-II — **Bihar economy**, agriculture & agro-industry, energy. Prelims — **E20**, biofuel feedstocks, Bihar crops.
Context	The oil-marketing companies' tender (issued **16 Oct**) for supply year 2026-27 seeks **~11 billion litres** for **E20**, but with **zero sugar diversion** after weak rains in Maharashtra–Karnataka. Grain routes stay open — but at a lower maize price.
Key Facts	■ Barred: **sugarcane juice, sugar syrup, B-heavy molasses**. Allowed: **maize, broken rice, FCI surplus rice, C-heavy molasses**. ■ Maize-ethanol price **₹71.86 → ₹68.86/L**; maize incentive **₹5.79 → ₹2.79/L**. ■ Bihar maize: **66.03 lakh MT** from **9.55 lakh ha** (2024-25); the state is a major **rabi-maize** producer. ■ 10 major Bihar grain-ethanol plants: capacity **47.64 crore L/yr**, but only **23.82 crore L** assured for 2025-26.
Way Fwd	Seek longer offtake contracts for Bihar units, link maize FPOs to distilleries and diversify into **DDGS** feed and starch to protect farm prices.
Concept	**Bihar Ethanol Production Promotion Policy, 2021** — Bihar was the first state with a dedicated ethanol policy under the **National Policy on Biofuels 2018**; India reached **E20** in 2025. **DDGS** = protein-rich by-product of grain distillation.



Patna Metro to be completed by 2028; Bihar's medical colleges rise from 13 to 31

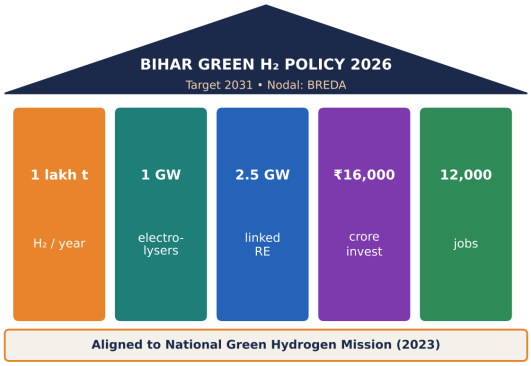
[BIHAR] BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Bihar Infrastructure)

Syllabus Linkage	Mains GS-II — **Bihar economy & infrastructure**, health. Prelims — Patna Metro, AIIMS, state schemes.
Context	CM **Samrat Choudhary** (in office since **15 Apr 2026**) inspected metro work on Nehru Path and set a **2028** deadline; the **12 Oct** cabinet (**23 agendas**) also highlighted health and bridge capacity built with Central support.
Key Facts	■ Metro: **Mithapur–Khemni Chak** elevated (**3.1 km**, Corridor-1) by **June 2027**; **8 km** underground Corridor-2 by **2028**. ■ Medical colleges **13 → 31**; MBBS seats **1,310 → 4,710**; **AIIMS Darbhanga** (~**₹2,000 cr**) is Bihar's 2nd AIIMS. ■ **OPRMC Phase-III**: **13,033 km** of roads maintained for 7 years at ~**₹10,590.53 cr** (2026-33). ■ 8 new Ganga/major bridges planned; works at **Buxar, Sonepur, Bhagalpur, Kahalgaon–Kataiya**.
Way Fwd	Time-bound execution, faculty recruitment for new colleges and last-mile feeder buses will decide whether capacity turns into outcomes.
Concept	**AIIMS** are set up under **PMSSY (2003)**; AIIMS Patna opened **2012**. **OPRMC** = Output & Performance-based Road Maintenance Contract — pay linked to road condition, not inputs.

Bihar Green Hydrogen Policy 2026: 1 lakh tonnes a year by 2031, 2,554 farm feeders to go solar

[BIHAR] BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Bihar Economy & S&T)

Syllabus Linkage	Mains GS-II — **Bihar energy & industrial policy**, role of S&T. Prelims — green hydrogen, electrolysers, state nodal agencies.
Context	Policy watch (cabinet of **30 Sep**, 30 agendas): Bihar adopted its first **Green Hydrogen Policy** aligned to the **National Green Hydrogen Mission (2023)**, alongside a big **solarisation** push for agriculture — key for the Rising Bihar investment drive.
Key Facts	■ Targets by **2031**: **1 lakh t/yr** green H_2, **1 GW** electrolyser manufacturing, **~2.5 GW** linked RE. ■ Expected **₹16,000 crore** investment, **~12,000** jobs; nodal agency **BREDA**. ■ **₹2,761.55 cr** to solarise **2,554** agri feeders (**2,585 MW**); **₹47.30 cr** incentives to panchayats. ■ Same cabinet: **VAT on ATF** at RCS airports cut **1% → 0**; **Mukhya Mantri Hemophilia Yojana** (Emicizumab, 255 patients).
Way Fwd	Anchor demand early (fertiliser, refinery at **Barauni**, city gas) and secure round-the-clock renewable power, since Bihar has limited land for solar parks.
Concept	**Green hydrogen** = H_2 from **electrolysis of water** using renewable power (no CO_2). **NGHM**: outlay **₹19,744 cr**, target **5 MMT/yr by 2030**; **SIGHT** programme gives electrolyser incentives.



Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar conferred on 106 artists; Bihar's Bhojpuri folk voice among awardees

[SOCIETY] BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-I (Bihar Culture)

Syllabus Linkage	Mains GS-I — **Indian culture with Bihar's role**, folk traditions. Prelims — awards, personalities of Bihar.
Context	The **Sangeet Natak Akademi** awards for **2024 and 2025** were presented in New Delhi. The award honours **Bharat Ratna** shehnai maestro **Ustad Bismillah Khan**, born at **Dumraon (Buxar), Bihar**. Today Patna also marks **Vijayadashami** at Gandhi Maidan.
Key Facts	■ Instituted **2006**; artists up to **40 years**; **₹25,000**, **Tamrapatra** and **Angavastram**. ■ **Manisha Srivastava (Rohtas)** honoured for **Bhojpuri folk** — Kajri, Sohar, Chaita, Batohiya. ■ Bismillah Khan: b. **21 Mar 1916**, Dumraon; **Bharat Ratna 2001**; played at **Red Fort, 15 Aug 1947**. ■ Patna's **71st Ramlila Mahotsav**: **90-ft** Ravan effigy with eco-friendly (green) crackers.
Way Fwd	Document and digitise Bhojpuri, Maithili and Magahi folk forms; link young artists to state cultural circuits and festivals.
Concept	**Sangeet Natak Akademi** (1952) — national academy of music, dance & drama under the **Ministry of Culture**. **Sohar** = birth song; **Kajri** = monsoon song; **Chaita** = sung in Chaitra month.

31	4,710	2028	13,033 km	₹2,000 cr
Medical colleges	MBBS seats	Patna Metro	Roads, OPRMC-III	AIIMS Darbhanga
up from 13	up from 1,310	full completion target	₹10,590.53 cr, 2026-33	Bihar's 2nd AIIMS

SECTION B — DATA POINT OF THE DAY

66.03 lakh MT
Bihar maize output, 2024-25

Grown on **9.55 lakh ha**; feeds Bihar's grain-ethanol plants (10 major units: **47.64 crore L/yr** capacity). Today's 2026-27 tender cuts the maize-ethanol price to **₹68.86/L**.

SECTION C — NATIONAL & WORLD polity • economy • IR • environment

INDIA–NEW ZEALAND FTA: IN FORCE FROM 20 OCT 2026



100%
Indian exports duty-free

USD 20 bn
investment to be facilitated

NZ$7 bn
trade target by 2030

5,000 + 1,000
skilled + working-holiday visas

Dairy OUT
sugar, edible oils also excluded

India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement enters into force today

[IR] BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (IR & Economy)

Syllabus Linkage	Mains GS-II — **India's foreign trade**, bilateral agreements, Indian economy. Prelims — FTAs, TRQs, Indo-Pacific partners.
Context	Signed in New Delhi on **27 Apr 2026**, the FTA takes effect on **20 Oct 2026**. It gives Indian goods full duty-free access while shielding India's **dairy** — the reason India stayed out of **RCEP**.
Key Facts	■ **100%** of Indian exports duty-free in NZ from day one; NZ tariffs of up to **10%** removed. ■ NZ to facilitate **USD 20 billion** investment; aim to double trade to **NZ$7 bn by 2030** (goods trade ~**USD 1.1 bn**, 2025-26). ■ Mobility: **5,000** skilled-worker visas + **1,000** Working Holiday visas a year; post-study work up to **3–4 yrs**. ■ Excluded: **dairy, sugar, edible oils**; **apples, kiwifruit, Manuka honey** via **TRQs** & minimum import prices.
Way Fwd	Use the pact to scale textiles, pharma and processed-food exports (incl. Bihar's **makhana**) and to build agri-tech and dairy-tech cooperation without opening dairy.
Concept	**FTA** removes tariffs on most trade; **CEPA/CECA** adds services & investment. **TRQ (Tariff Rate Quota)** = lower duty only up to a set quantity. India quit **RCEP** talks in **Nov 2019**.

Supreme Court: internet access is a right of children too; orders national hash database against abuse material

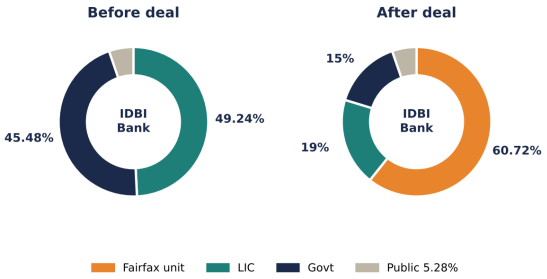
[POLITY] BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Polity & Governance)

Syllabus Linkage	Mains GS-II — **Fundamental Rights**, judiciary, child protection, IT governance. Prelims — Art. 19/21, POCSO, IT Act.
Context	In *Just Rights for Children Alliance v. S. Harish* (order of **15 Oct**), a bench of **Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K. Vinod Chandran** rejected blanket bans on children's internet use and instead targeted **CSEAM** (child sexual exploitative & abuse material).
Key Facts	■ Centre to create a **National Hash & URL List Database**, each entry verified by **≥3 trained analysts**. ■ Matching content to be removed **immediately**; complaint reporting within **2 hours**; grievance option within **2 clicks**. ■ **Exemplary fines** and forfeiture of **paywalled revenue** for repeat defaults; IT safe harbour (**Sec. 79**) no excuse. ■ Digital-safety education via **NCERT/SCERTs**; progress affidavit before next hearing on **10 Dec**.
Way Fwd	MeitY should notify enforceable child-safety rules under the IT Act and operationalise the database with privacy safeguards and transparency reports.
Concept	**Faheema Shirin (Kerala HC, 2019)**: internet access part of right to education & privacy. **Anuradha Bhasin (SC, 2020)**: speech & trade via internet protected under **Art. 19(1)(a)/(g)**. **POCSO Act, 2012**.

CCEA clears 60.72% IDBI Bank stake sale to Fairfax unit for ₹52,878 crore

[ECONOMY] BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Indian Economy)

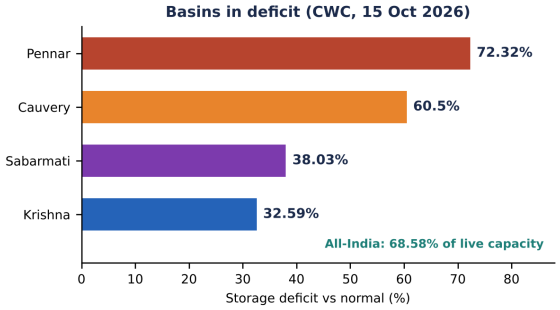
Syllabus Linkage	Mains GS-II — **Indian economy**, banking reforms, disinvestment, FDI. Prelims — PSBs, LIC, DIPAM, RBI 'fit & proper'.
Context	Approved on **14 Oct**, the deal transfers control of IDBI Bank to a Canadian entity whose parent is **Fairfax Financial Holdings**; the Finance Minister called it **'strategic restructuring'**. It will be the **largest FDI in India's financial sector**.
Key Facts	■ Stake sold **60.72%** = Govt **30.48%** + LIC **30.24%**; value **₹52,878 crore**. ■ After the deal: Govt retains **15%**, LIC **19%**. ■ Two-stage bidding: **5** EoIs, **4** qualified, **2** final bidders; buyer must satisfy **RBI** norms. ■ PSB Gross NPAs fell from **11.2% (2018)** to **1.8% (2026)** — context for privatisation push.
Way Fwd	Close the deal within RBI timelines, protect depositor and employee interests, and use proceeds for capex rather than revenue gaps.
Concept	**IDBI** set up in **1964** (RBI subsidiary), autonomous **1976**; LIC took **51%** in **2019**, after which RBI recategorised it as a **private-sector bank**. **Strategic disinvestment** = transfer of management control; handled by **DIPAM**.



Reservoir storage at 68.58% of capacity; Pennar and Cauvery basins in deep deficit

[ENVIRONMENT] BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Geography & Environment)

Syllabus Linkage	Mains GS-II — **Indian geography**, water resources, irrigation. Prelims — river basins, CWC, reservoirs.
Context	The **Central Water Commission** bulletin of **15 Oct** shows a weak end to the monsoon in the south: the **178** monitored reservoirs hold **126.717 BCM**, well below last year — a risk for rabi irrigation, drinking water and hydropower.
Key Facts	■ Storage **68.58%** of live capacity — **24.53%** lower than last year and **16.44%** below normal. ■ Deficit vs normal: **Pennar 72.32%**, **Cauvery 60.50%**, **Sabarmati 38.03%**, **Krishna 32.59%**. ■ Critical dams: **Aliyar 0%**, **Idukki 10.62%**, **Somasila 22.05%**, **Mettur 32.49%**. ■ Surplus basins: **Subarnarekha, Narmada, Mahanadi**.
Way Fwd	Basin-level water budgeting, micro-irrigation and groundwater recharge; Bihar's lesson — store Kosi-Gandak flood water through **Jal-Jivan-Hariyali**.
Concept	**CWC** (1945) under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** issues a **weekly** reservoir bulletin. **Live storage** = water usable above dead-storage level. Pennar & Cauvery are **rain-fed peninsular** rivers.



India's carbon market moves to trading; case grows for joining the compliance-markets coalition

[REPORT] BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Environment & Economy)

Syllabus Linkage	Mains GS-II — **economy & environment**, climate policy, trade. Prelims — CCTS, BEE, CBAM, carbon credits.
Context	India's **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)** is now live; with credits due in **October**, trading on power exchanges is expected **Nov-Jan**. Analysts argue India should engage the **Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets (OCCCM)**.
Key Facts	■ About **500 companies** in **7 sectors** filed compliance reports by **31 July**. ■ OCCCM founders include **EU, China, Brazil**; work plan adopted on **14 Sep** in Wuhan. ■ **50+ countries** price carbon; EU **CBAM** definitive phase began **1 Jan 2026**.
Way Fwd	Credible MRV and price discovery at home can let Indian exporters offset **CBAM** costs; joining coalitions should protect **CBDR** principles.
Concept	**CCTS (2023)** under the **Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022**; administrator **BEE**, regulator for trading **CERC**. **CBAM** = EU levy on carbon embedded in imports (steel, aluminium, cement...).

SECTION D — PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

1. Bihar: VAT on **ATF** at **RCS (UDAN)** airports cut from **1% to zero** (cabinet, 30 Sep).	**4. CISF** moves to **sector-based** commands (Power, Coal, Steel, Ports...) from **1 Nov 2026**.
2. Bihar: **Mukhya Mantri Hemophilia Yojana** — **Emicizumab** for **255** registered patients.	**5. Basawan**, Akbar-era painter: *A Family of Cheetahs* sold for **£10.245 million**.
3. SC (Justices **P.S. Narasimha & Alok Aradhe**): no **mid-course fee hikes** in professional courses.	**6. Baltic Sea**: world's largest **brackish** water body; **9** bordering countries.

SECTION E — PRACTICE CORNER

Q1. With reference to State Legislative Councils, consider the following statements: 1. One-twelfth of members are elected by registered graduates of at least three years' standing. 2. One-third of members are elected by members of the Legislative Assembly. 3. The Bihar Legislative Council has 75 members. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only **(b)** 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only **(d)** 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d) — All three are correct: **Art. 171(3)** fixes **1/12** graduates, **1/12** teachers, **1/3** local bodies, **1/3** MLAs and **1/6** nominated; Bihar's Council has **75** seats.

Q2. Under the India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement that entered into force on 20 October 2026, which one of the following sectors has been kept out of India's tariff concessions?

(a) Wool **(b)** Wood and timber
(c) Dairy products **(d)** Sheep meat

Answer: (c) — **Dairy**, sugar and edible oils are excluded; NZ gains access for **wood, wool, sheep meat** and raw hides, while apples and kiwifruit come under **TRQs**.

Mains Practice: Bihar is emerging as a grain-based ethanol hub. In the light of recent changes in national ethanol procurement, examine the opportunities and risks for Bihar's maize farmers and distilleries, and suggest a way forward. (BPSC Mains GS-II, ~250 words)

Hint: Intro: **Ethanol Policy 2021**, **66.03 lakh MT** maize. Body: opportunities (sugar route barred → grain demand, jobs, farm prices); risks (price cut to **₹68.86/L**, capacity **47.64** vs assured **23.82 crore L**, OMC monopsony). Way forward: long-term offtake, FPO linkage, DDGS/starch, storage & drying infrastructure.

ONE-LINE REVISION: MLC polls **23 Oct** (8 seats, counting **27 Oct**) • Maize-ethanol **₹68.86/L**, sugar route barred • **India–NZ FTA** live from **20 Oct** • SC: internet a **child's right** too • IDBI **60.72%** → Fairfax **₹52,878 cr**.

Compiled & simplified by the StudyForGS.com Research Team | **▶ YouTube: @Study_ForGS** | **➤ Telegram: t.me/studyforgeneralstudies**