CURRENT AFFAIRS — 21 October 2026

Wednesday, 21 October 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Bihar + National • BPSC Prelims & Mains digest

StudyForGS.com
DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR BPSC CCE

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Gorakhpur–Siliguri Expressway**: ~**416 km** of its length lies in **north Bihar**.
- Bihar NH Annual Plan **2026-27**: **32 projects**, **~2,424 km**, **~Rs 1.64 lakh crore**.
- **UDAN** (launched **21 Oct 2016**) completes **10 years** today.
- Bihar plans airports at **Kishanganj, Chhapra, Ulao, Forbesganj, Sabeya** + **9 heliports**.
- **Bihar MLC polls** for **8 seats** (4 Graduates' + 4 Teachers') on **23 Oct**; counting **27 Oct**.
- Bihar **Green Hydrogen Policy 2026**: **1 lakh tonnes/yr** by **2031**.
- **India–New Zealand FTA** in force from **20 Oct 2026**.
- Polish PM **Donald Tusk** in India **21–23 Oct**; ties are a **Strategic Partnership** (2024).
- **GHI 2026**: India **100th/122**, score **24.1** – 'serious'.
- **PLFS Sept 2026**: unemployment **5.0%**; urban female LFPR **25.9%**.

SECTION A | BIHAR SPECIAL — State Schemes, Policy, Administration & Economy

Gorakhpur–Siliguri Expressway to reshape north Bihar connectivity

BIHAR | BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Bihar Geography & Economy)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: **Bihar geography** (north Bihar plains, Kosi–Mithila belt), **infrastructure & economy**. Prelims: districts on route, **Bharatmala**.
Context	The proposed route of the **greenfield Gorakhpur–Siliguri Expressway** runs across **north Bihar** from **Gopalganj** to **Kishanganj**, giving the Kosi–Mithila belt its first access-controlled east–west corridor.
Key Facts	■ Total length about **519 km**; roughly **416 km in Bihar** (largest share). ■ **4-lane access-controlled**, expandable to **6 lanes**; cost estimate about **Rs 38,645 crore**. ■ Bihar districts: **Gopalganj, W & E Champaran, Sheohar, Sitamarhi, Darbhanga, Madhubani, Supaul, Araria, Kishanganj**. ■ Links **UP (Gorakhpur)** to **Siliguri (WB)** – gateway to the **Northeast** via the **Chicken's Neck**.
Way Fwd	Fast-track **land acquisition** in flood-prone Kosi areas; build **flood-resilient embankment design** and **logistics nodes** along the route.
Concept	**Greenfield expressway** = built on a new alignment, not by widening an old road. **Siliguri Corridor (Chicken's Neck)** ≈ **22 km** wide strip linking mainland India to the NE.

Centre clears Rs 1.64 lakh crore NH Annual Plan 2026-27 for Bihar

BIHAR | BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Bihar Economy)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: **Bihar economy – infrastructure**, Centre–State cooperation. Prelims: **NHAI**, ring roads, corridors.
Context	At a meeting in New Delhi chaired by the **Union Road Transport Secretary**, the **Annual Action Plan 2026-27** for Bihar was cleared – the largest-ever annual highway package for the state.
Key Facts	■ **32 projects**, about **2,424 km**, cost about **Rs 1,64,518 crore**. ■ **NHAI: 14 projects**, **~1,685 km**, **~Rs 1,39,578 crore** (about **85%** of cost). ■ **State NH wing: 18 projects**, **~739 km**, **~Rs 24,940 crore**. ■ Corridors: **Raxaul–Haldia**, **Buxar–Bhagalpur**, **Muzaffarpur–Barauni**, **Patna Northern Ring Road**.
Way Fwd	Time-bound DPRs, **quality audits** (cap on deep below-estimate tenders) and **bridge-health monitoring** to avoid repeats of span collapses.
Concept	**National Highways** are on the **Union List (Entry 23)**; declared under the **NH Act, 1956**. **NHAI** set up under the **NHAI Act, 1988**.

BIHAR CONNECTIVITY MAP – Expressway & UDAN Airports



KEY NUMBERS

~416 km
of expressway in Bihar

10
Bihar districts on route

Rs 38,645 cr
estimated cost

5 + 9
new airports + heliports

10 yrs
of UDAN (21 Oct 2016)

UDAN turns 10: Bihar readies 5 new airports and 9 heliports

BIHAR BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Economy & Infrastructure)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: **Bihar infrastructure**, regional connectivity. Prelims: **UDAN**, **NCAP 2016**, Bihar airports.
Context	The **Regional Connectivity Scheme – UDAN** completes **10 years** on **21 October 2026**. Bihar's cabinet has approved airports and heliports in **'challenge mode'** under **Modified UDAN**.
Key Facts	■ UDAN launched **21 Oct 2016**; first flight **Shimla–Delhi** (**27 Apr 2017**). ■ So far: **669 routes**, **95 airports**, **~3.5 lakh flights**, **~1.66 crore passengers**. ■ Bihar's proposed airports: **Kishanganj, Chhapra, Ulao (Begusarai), Forbesganj (Araria), Sabeya (Gopalganj)**. ■ State sweeteners: **ATF VAT cut from 1% to zero** at RCS airports; **9 heliports** planned.
Way Fwd	Ensure **route sustainability** beyond VGF years; integrate airports with **tourism circuits** (Buddhist, Ramayana) and cargo for **makhana & litchi**.
Concept	**UDAN** = 'Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik'. **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** shared by Centre and states; capped fares on **50% seats**. **Darbhanga** airport began UDAN flights in **2020**.

Bihar Legislative Council: polling for 8 seats on 23 October

POLITY BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Polity – State Legislature)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: **State Legislature**, Bihar polity. Prelims: **Art. 169, 171**, composition of Councils.
Context	Campaigning has ended for the biennial **Bihar Legislative Council** polls in **4 Graduates'** and **4 Teachers'** constituencies; the sitting members' terms expire on **16 November 2026**.
Key Facts	■ Graduates': **Patna, Darbhanga, Tirhut, Kosi**; Teachers': **Patna, Darbhanga, Tirhut, Saran**. ■ Polling **23 Oct (8 am–4 pm)**; counting **27 Oct**; process ends **31 Oct**. ■ Voting by **preferential ballot** – **single transferable vote**.
Way Fwd	Clean up **graduate voter rolls** and raise turnout so the Council keeps its role as a house of **expert opinion**.
Concept	**Art. 171**: Council ≤ **1/3 of Assembly**, min **40**. Electorate: **1/3** local bodies, **1/3** MLAs, **1/12** graduates, **1/12** teachers, **1/6** nominated. Bihar Council has **75** seats; a **permanent house**, **1/3** members retire every **2 years**.

BIHAR ENERGY ROADMAP – Green Hydrogen Policy 2026 & Feeder Solarisation



Bihar's Green Hydrogen Policy 2026 and farm-feeder solarisation

BIHAR BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Energy & Sci-Tech)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: **Bihar economy – energy**, role of **science & technology**. Prelims: **green hydrogen**, electrolysers.
Context	Ahead of the **23 October cabinet meeting**, the state's energy roadmap is in focus: the cabinet has cleared the **Bihar Green Hydrogen Policy 2026** and grants to solarise the remaining **agricultural feeders**.
Key Facts	■ Target **1 lakh tonnes/yr** green hydrogen by **2031**; **1 GW electrolyser** capacity. ■ Expected investment **~Rs 16,000 crore**; **~12,000 jobs**; **~2.5 GW** linked renewables. ■ Solarisation of **2,554 farm feeders** = **2,585 MW**; grant **Rs 2,761.55 crore** (**Rs 1.05 crore/MW**).
Way Fwd	Pair hydrogen hubs with **Barauni refinery & fertiliser** demand; secure **water** and **cheap RE** to make green H2 viable.
Concept	**Green hydrogen** = H2 from **electrolysis of water** using renewable power (grey = from natural gas). **National Green Hydrogen Mission (2023)**: **5 MMT/yr by 2030**, outlay **Rs 19,744 crore**.

Panchayat polls 2026: voter-list revision under way in Bihar

BIHAR BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Local Governance)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: **Panchayati Raj in Bihar**, 73rd Amendment. Prelims: **State Election Commission**, women's reservation.
Context	With the current panchayat terms ending in **December 2026**, the **State Election Commission** is revising voter lists, giving citizens **four opportunities** to seek corrections.
Key Facts	■ About **8,053 gram panchayats** (down from **8,387** in 2021 due to urbanisation); **533 panchayat samitis**; **38 zila parishads**. ■ **Multi-post EVMs** – one control unit with **6 ballot units** for different posts. ■ New **reservation roster**; **50% seats for women**.
Way Fwd	Timely polls, **digital roll verification** and capacity building of newly elected **mukhiyas**.
Concept	**Art. 243K**: SEC conducts panchayat polls. **Bihar (2006)** was the **first state** to give **50% reservation to women** in PRIs. Term **5 years** (**Art. 243E**).

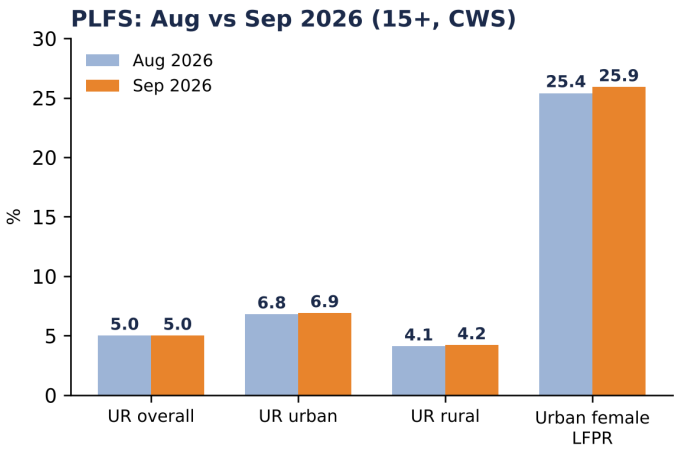
SECTION B | DATA POINT OF THE DAY

PLFS (Sept 2026) – All-India unemployment rate (15+, CWS)

5.0%

Unchanged from August. **Urban UR 6.9%**, **rural 4.2%**; **LFPR 55.5%**, **WPR 52.7%**. **Urban female LFPR 25.9%** – the highest since **October 2025**. Released by the **NSO (MoSPI)** in its monthly bulletin.

Concept: UR = unemployed ÷ labour force; **LFPR** = labour force ÷ population; **WPR** = employed ÷ population. **CWS** = activity status in the **last 7 days**. Bihar's low **female LFPR** makes this series vital for state-level analysis (**GS-I statistics**).

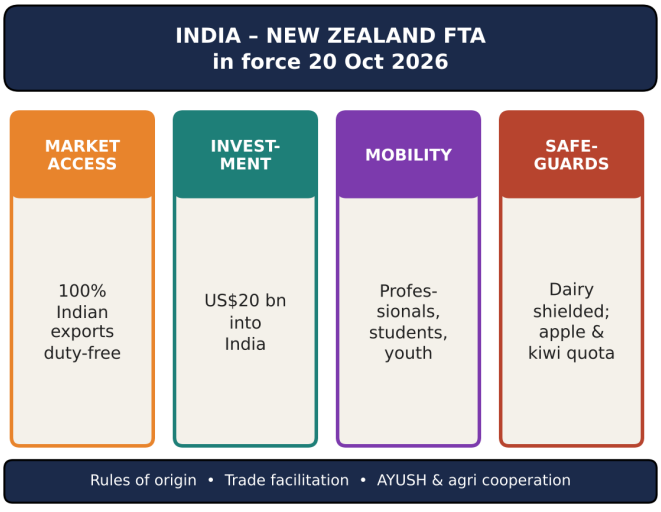


SECTION C | NATIONAL & WORLD — Polity, Economy, IR & Reports

India–New Zealand FTA comes into force

ECONOMY BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Indian Economy – Trade)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: **Indian economy – external trade**, FTAs. Prelims: India's trade agreements.
Context	The **India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement** entered into force on **20 October 2026**, opening the NZ market fully to Indian goods while protecting India's sensitive farm and dairy lines.
Key Facts	■ **100%** of Indian exports get **duty-free** access to NZ. ■ NZ to facilitate **US$20 billion** investment into India. ■ Gains for **textiles, leather, engineering, pharma, processed food**; **quotas** for NZ **apples & kiwifruit**. ■ Mobility pathways for Indian **professionals, students & youth**.
Way Fwd	Use FTA utilisation desks to help **MSMEs** (incl. Bihar's **makhana & handloom** exporters) claim preferences.
Concept	**FTA** cuts tariffs between members but each keeps its own external tariff (unlike a **customs union**). **Rules of origin** prevent trade deflection.



Polish PM Donald Tusk begins three-day India visit

IR BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (International Relations)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: **India's foreign relations** – Europe. Prelims: Strategic Partnerships, India–EU.
Context	Polish PM **Donald Tusk** is in India from **21 to 23 October 2026** with a large business delegation; talks with PM Modi are on **22 October** in New Delhi.
Key Facts	■ Ties elevated to **Strategic Partnership** in **Aug 2024**; **Joint Action Plan 2024-28**. ■ Agenda: **trade, defence, emerging tech, renewables**, India–EU partnership. ■ **Business forums** in **Delhi (22 Oct)** and **Bengaluru (23 Oct)**.
Way Fwd	Leverage Poland as a **Central European gateway** for Indian IT, pharma and defence co-production.
Concept	**'Good Maharaja'** Jam Sahib **Digvijaysinhji** of **Nawanagar** sheltered ~**1,000 Polish children** in WWII; Warsaw has a square named after him.

SCO Heads of Government meet in Dushanbe; India seeks united action on terror

IR BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (International Relations)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: **Regional groupings**, India & Central Asia. Prelims: **SCO members, RATS**.
Context	Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** represented India at the **25th SCO Council of Heads of Government** in **Dushanbe, Tajikistan**, calling for coordinated global action against **terrorism**.
Key Facts	■ **25th** CHG meeting, **19–20 Oct 2026**; CHG mainly handles **trade & economic** agenda. ■ SCO has **10 members**: China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Belarus + 4 Central Asian states. ■ **RATS** HQ in **Tashkent**; Secretariat in **Beijing**.
Way Fwd	Push **Chabahar–INSTC** connectivity and zero tolerance for **cross-border terrorism**.
Concept	**SCO** founded **2001** (Shanghai); India & Pakistan full members **2017**, Iran **2023**, Belarus **2024**. Tajikistan borders Afghanistan via the **Wakhan corridor**.

SCO – 10 MEMBER STATES & DUSHANBE MEET



SCO FACT FILE

2001
founded in Shanghai

10
member states

2017
India full member

Tashkent
RATS headquarters

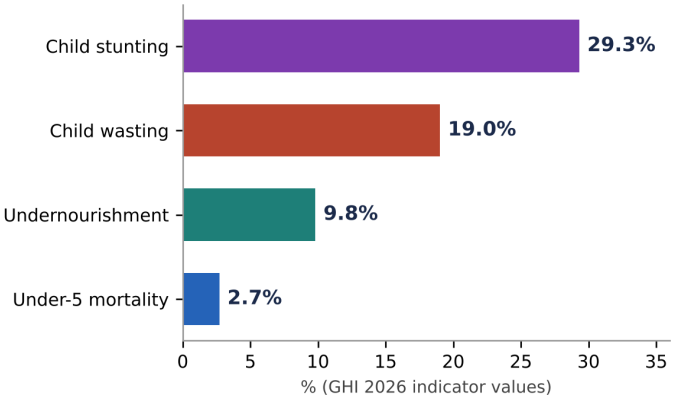
Beijing
Secretariat

Global Hunger Index 2026: India ranked 100th of 122

REPORT BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Economy – Poverty & Nutrition)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: **poverty, nutrition, human development** (Bihar has high stunting). Prelims: GHI indicators.
Context	The **GHI 2026** (theme: '**No security without food security**') places India in the '**serious**' category (as every year since **2012**), though its rank improved by two places.
Key Facts	■ Score **24.1**; rank **100/122** (from **102/123**). ■ **Child wasting 19.0%** – highest in South Asia; **stunting 29.3%**. ■ **Undernourishment 9.8%**; **under-5 mortality 2.7%**.
Way Fwd	Converge **POSHAN 2.0**, **PDS** and **WASH**; target the first **1,000 days** in high-burden states like Bihar.
Concept	GHI uses **4 indicators**: undernourishment (**1/3** weight), child stunting (**1/6**), child wasting (**1/6**), under-5 mortality (**1/3**). Published by **Welthungerhilfe** & **Concern Worldwide**.

India – GHI 2026: Rank 100/122, Score 24.1



PM-SETU: Rs 1,194.92 crore cleared for five ITI clusters

SOCIETY BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Economy – Skilling & Employment)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: **employment, human resource development**. Prelims: skilling schemes, ITIs.
Context	The **National Steering Committee** of **PM-SETU** (6th meeting) approved upgradation plans for **5 ITI clusters** in **Maharashtra, Odisha and J&K** with industry anchor partners.
Key Facts	■ **Hub-and-spoke**: each cluster = **1 hub + 4 spoke ITIs → 25 ITIs**. ■ Cumulative sanctions now **Rs 3,687 crore**; **3,744 trainers** trained via NSTIs. ■ Scheme: **Rs 60,000 crore** to upgrade **1,000 govt ITIs** (launched Oct 2025).
Way Fwd	Bihar should fast-track its cluster proposals to cut **skill-linked migration**.
Concept	**PM-SETU** = PM Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs; nodal ministry **MSDE**. **ITIs** run **NCVT/SCVT**-affiliated trade courses.

SECTION D | PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

Question / Fact	Answer
Bihar's first **Tech Park** (Gardanibagh, Patna) to be built by	**NBCC** – ~**5,000** direct jobs
Varanasi–Kolkata Expressway length in Bihar	**162 km** across **4 districts**
AUSTRAHIND 2026 (5th edition) venue	**Thiruvananthapuram**, 19 Oct–1 Nov
Vikramshila Setu spans the Ganga at	**Bhagalpur**; restoration target **Nov 2026**
Chair of Bihar Cabinet meeting on **23 Oct**	CM **Samrat Choudhary**
Bihar **Mukhyamantri Udyami Yojana** max support	**Rs 10 lakh** (Rs 5 lakh grant + Rs 5 lakh loan)

SECTION E | PRACTICE CORNER

Q1. With reference to the State Legislative Council, consider the following statements:
1. One-twelfth of its members are elected by graduates of at least three years' standing residing in the state.
2. One-sixth of its members are nominated by the Governor.
3. Its total strength cannot exceed one-half of the strength of the State Legislative Assembly.
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: (b) — Under **Art. 171**, **1/12** are elected by **graduates** and **1/6** are **nominated** by the Governor. The Council's strength cannot exceed **one-third** (not one-half) of the Assembly, with a minimum of **40**.

Q2. The proposed Gorakhpur–Siliguri Expressway passes through which of the following districts of Bihar?
1. Sitamarhi
2. Supaul
3. Nalanda
4. Kishanganj
Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1, 2 and 4 only
(c) 2, 3 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (b) — The alignment runs across **north Bihar** – Gopalganj, Champaran, Sheohar, **Sitamarhi**, Darbhanga, Madhubani, **Supaul**, Araria and **Kishanganj**. **Nalanda** lies **south of the Ganga** and is not on the route.

Mains Practice: "Connectivity is the new engine of Bihar's growth." In the light of the Gorakhpur–Siliguri Expressway, the NH Annual Plan 2026-27 and new UDAN airports, examine how transport infrastructure can reduce regional disparity and out-migration in Bihar. (BPSC Mains GS-II, 38 marks)

Hint: Intro: Bihar's low per-capita income and north–south divide. Body: market access for **makhana, litchi, maize**; logistics & industrial nodes; tourism circuits; flood-resilient design; land & funding challenges. Conclude with **PM Gati Shakti**-style integrated planning.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Remember: **~416 km** of Gorakhpur–Siliguri in Bihar • NH Plan **Rs 1.64 lakh cr** • **UDAN @10** • MLC polls **23 Oct** (**Art. 171**) • India–NZ FTA **20 Oct** • GHI **100/122**.

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