CURRENT AFFAIRS — 22 October 2026

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Thursday, 22 October 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Bihar + National • BPSC Prelims & Mains digest

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **NH-22**: Muzaffarpur–Sitamarhi–Sonbarsa four-lane, **82.578 km**, **₹3,590.73 cr**.
- Gaya–Sitamarhi corridor links **5 districts**; **7 major bridges, 3 ROBs**.
- **Sudha Sakhi**: milk producers target **12 lakh → 50 lakh+**.
- Pension life verification: **88.37%** done; **13.57 lakh** pending; deadline **30 Nov**.
- Bihar MLC polls: **8 seats** (4 Graduates + 4 Teachers) on **23 Oct**; counting **27 Oct**.
- CM **Samrat Choudhary** reviews draft **Bihar AI Policy-2026**.
- Patna HC: **Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950** – Meira Kumar entitled to compensation.
- Core sector growth **7.9%** in Sept 2026 – highest in the new (2022-23 base) series.
- **India–New Zealand FTA** in force from **20 Oct 2026**; 100% Indian tariff lines duty-free.
- **SIMBEX-2026** at Visakhapatnam (21–26 Oct); BEL radar deal **~₹770 cr**.

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

Bihar: North–South Road Corridor & New Power Line



KEY NUMBERS

- **₹3,590.73 cr** — NH-22 four-lane cost
- **82.578 km** — Muzaffarpur–Sonbarsa
- **5 districts** — Gaya to Sitamarhi
- **7 + 3 + 2** — bridges, ROBs, flyovers
- **4 districts** — Pirpainti–Jhanjharpur line
- **TBCB** — bidding route for line

Gaya–Sitamarhi NH-22 corridor: ₹3,590.73 cr four-lane to Nepal border

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

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: Bihar economy – infrastructure, connectivity; Bihar geography. Prelims: NH numbers, border districts, pilgrim sites.
Context	The remaining **Muzaffarpur–Sitamarhi–Sonbarsa** stretch of **NH-22** will be four-laned at **₹3,590.73 crore**, completing a **south–north corridor from Gaya to Sitamarhi**. The **Gaya–Muzaffarpur** portion is reported complete.
Key Facts	■ Length of the four-lane stretch: **82.578 km**; ends at **Sonbarsa** near the **India–Nepal border**. ■ Corridor links **5 districts**: **Gaya, Jehanabad, Patna, Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi**. ■ Structures: **7 major bridges, 3 railway overbridges (ROBs), 2 flyovers**. ■ Boosts access to **Janki Punaura Dham** (Sitamarhi), believed birthplace of **Mata Sita**. ■ Aids freight and **Indo-Nepal trade**; completion date not yet specified.

Pirpainti–Jhanjharpur power line to carry south Bihar's thermal power north

BIHAR — BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Bihar Economy – Energy)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: Bihar economy – power sector, infrastructure. Prelims: power plants and districts of Bihar.
Context	Bihar has informed the **Union Ministry of Power** of a new transmission line from the upcoming **Pirpainti thermal power plant (Bhagalpur)** to **Jhanjharpur (Madhubani)**, crossing the **Ganga** to strengthen supply in **north Bihar**.
Key Facts	■ Route covers **4 districts**: **Bhagalpur, Begusarai, Darbhanga, Madhubani**. ■ **REC Power Development & Consultancy Ltd** is the **bid process coordinator** (resolution of **5 May 2026**). ■ Developer to be chosen through **Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB)**; new substations needed. ■ **Begusarai** to get a direct supply link from the Pirpainti plant.

Way Fwd	Time-bound land acquisition, flood-proof design on Bagmati–Lakhandei plains and logistics hubs at Sitamarhi/Sonbarsa.
Concept	**National Highways** are a **Union List** subject (Entry 23, Seventh Schedule); built by **NHAI/MoRTH**. Sitamarhi is one of Bihar's **7 districts bordering Nepal**.

Way Fwd	Fix route alignment and river-crossing design early; pair with feeder separation so rural north Bihar gets reliable supply.
Concept	**TBCB** under the **Electricity Act, 2003** (Sec 63): tariff adopted by the regulator when set via transparent bidding. Bihar's discoms: **NBPDCL** (north) and **SBPDCL** (south).

'Sudha Sakhi' Model – How Bihar Plans 50 Lakh Milk Producers



'Sudha Sakhi': Jeevika didis to take milk producers from 12 lakh to 50 lakh

BIHAR BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Bihar Economy – Agriculture & Allied)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: Bihar economy – animal husbandry, cooperatives, women SHGs. Prelims: COMPFED, Sudha, Jeevika.
Context	Bihar plans to expand its dairy cooperative network by turning **Jeevika didis** into panchayat-level **'Sudha Sakhis'**, aiming to raise milk producers from about **12 lakh to over 50 lakh**.
Key Facts	■ About **7,000 Jeevika didis** trained in dairy and animal husbandry as **Pashu Sakhis**. ■ Sudha Sakhis to give **veterinary first aid, balanced feed advice and artificial insemination**; paid **service-based incentives**. ■ Implemented by **COMPFED** (Sudha brand) with **Jeevika**; dairy societies under **'Sahkar Se Samriddhi'**. ■ Women linked to **Jeevika Sudha outlets** and village **milk collection centres**.
Way Fwd	Assure fair procurement prices, cold-chain and fodder banks; track women's income, not just headcount.
Concept	**COMPFED** (est. **1983**) follows the **Anand (AMUL) three-tier model**: village society → district union → state federation. **JEEViKA** = Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (**2006**).

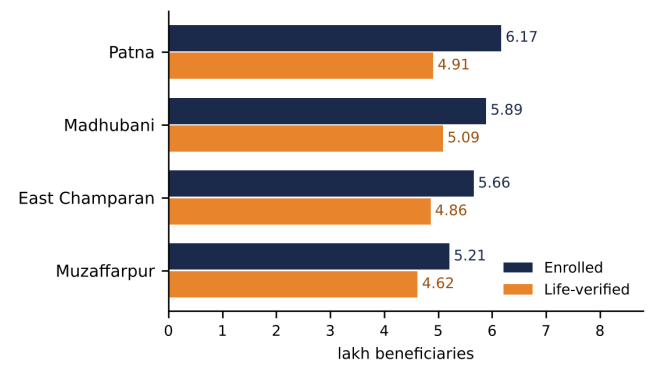
Social security pensions: 88.37% life verification done, 13.57 lakh pending

BIHAR BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Bihar – Welfare Schemes & Governance)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: welfare schemes of Bihar, governance, DBT. GS-I: statistical analysis of data.
Context	Bihar's **Social Welfare Department** reports that annual **life verification** of social security pensioners is **88.37%** complete; Minister **Dr Shweta Gupta** urged the remaining beneficiaries to verify before the deadline.
Key Facts	■ Enrolled: **1,16,71,188**; verified: **1,03,13,620**; pending: **13,57,568**. ■ Deadline **30 November** every year; missing it can **suspend pension**. ■ Most enrolled: **Patna (6.17 lakh)**, Madhubani, East Champaran, Muzaffarpur, **Gaya**. ■ Most verified: **Madhubani (5.09 lakh)**, Patna, East Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Samastipur.
Way Fwd	Doorstep face-authentication camps for bed-ridden and remote elderly so genuine pensioners are not dropped.
Concept	Bihar's old-age, widow and disability pensions were raised to **₹1,100/month** in **2025**; paid by **DBT**. **Article 41** (DPSP): public assistance in old age, sickness and disablement.

Bihar Pension Life Verification

State: 88.37% verified • 13.57 lakh pending • deadline 30 Nov



Top districts by enrolment (state data, Oct 2026)

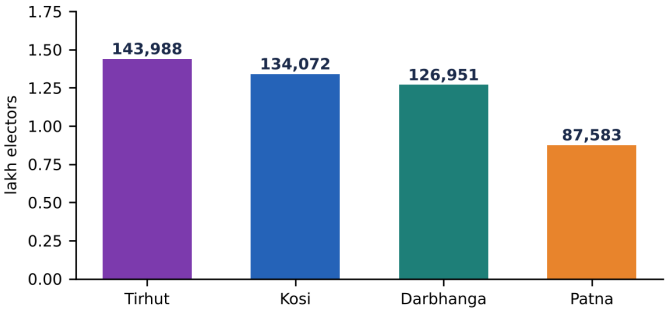
Bihar Legislative Council: polling for 8 graduates' and teachers' seats on 23 Oct

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

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: Indian polity – State Legislature (Art. 168–171), elections. Prelims: composition of Legislative Council.
Context	The Election Commission is holding polls to **8 Bihar Legislative Council seats** – **4 Graduates'** (Patna, Darbhanga, Tirhut, Kosi) and **4 Teachers'** (Patna, Darbhanga, Tirhut, Saran) – as current terms end on **16 November**.
Key Facts	■ Polling **23 Oct (8 am–4 pm)**; counting **27 Oct**; process ends **31 Oct**. ■ Graduate electors: **4,92,594**; teacher electors: **40,253**. ■ Largest graduate electorate: **Tirhut (1,43,988)**; smallest: **Patna (87,583)**. ■ **28 candidates** in fray across 8 seats.
Way Fwd	Raise graduate enrolment (only a fraction of eligible graduates register) and use Councils for expert, deliberative review of Bills.
Concept	**Art. 171**: Council size ≤ **1/3** of Assembly (min **40**); **1/12** elected by graduates (3 yrs' standing) and **1/12** by teachers (secondary and above); members serve **6 years**, **1/3 retire every 2 years**. Bihar Council: **75** seats.

Bihar MLC Polls (23 Oct): Graduates' Electorate

8 seats = 4 Graduates' + 4 Teachers' • counting 27 Oct



Total: graduates 4,92,594 • teachers 40,253 • 28 candidates

CM reviews draft Bihar AI Policy-2026 for education, health, farms and services

SCI-TECH BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Role of Science & Technology)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: role and impact of science & technology in Bihar's development; e-governance.
Context	Chief Minister **Samrat Choudhary** held a meeting in Patna on **22 October** on the draft **Bihar AI Policy-2026**, which proposes using **artificial intelligence** to make public services more effective and accessible.
Key Facts	■ Focus sectors: **education, health, agriculture and government services**. ■ Follows Bihar's recent **Green Hydrogen Policy 2026** (target **1 lakh tonnes/yr by 2031**). ■ Budget, nodal agency and timeline yet to be announced.
Way Fwd	Build Hindi/Bhojpuri/Maithili language models, data-protection safeguards and AI skilling in ITIs and polytechnics.
Concept	**IndiaAI Mission** (2024, outlay **₹10,371.92 cr**) – compute, datasets, startups. **DPDP Act, 2023** governs personal data used by AI systems.

Patna HC: State must prove vesting under Land Reforms Act; Meira Kumar gets relief

BIHAR BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Polity – Judiciary; Bihar Land Reforms)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: judiciary, property rights; GS-I/II: land reforms in Bihar. Prelims: Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950.
Context	A single bench of **Justice Khatim Reza** set aside a **2023 Patna DM order** that had cancelled the *jamabandi* of land acquired from former Lok Sabha Speaker **Meira Kumar's** family in **1975–76** for a drain, and recognised her **right to compensation**.
Key Facts	■ Land: about **18 kathas 10 dhurs** at **Mainpura, Patna**; no compensation paid for **~50 years**. ■ Law examined: **Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950**, **Sections 3 and 4(h)**. ■ Court: State must prove land **vested** in it; **settlement of 1941** pre-dates the **1 Jan 1946** cut-off of Sec 4(h). ■ Long-standing revenue records **cannot be cancelled summarily**; *jamabandi* restored.
Way Fwd	Digitise and clean land records, and settle old acquisition dues to cut land litigation in Bihar's courts.
Concept	The **Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950** abolished **zamindari**; its challenge in *Kameshwar Singh* led to the **First Amendment (1951)** adding **Art. 31A, 31B and the Ninth Schedule**. Right to property is now a legal right under **Art. 300A**.

SECTION B | DATA POINT OF THE DAY

Core sector grows 7.9% in September 2026 – best in the new series

ECONOMY BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (Indian Economy) + GS-I (Statistics)

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: Indian economy – industry, growth indicators. GS-I: statistical analysis. Prelims: ICI, IIP, base years.
Context	The **Index of Eight Core Industries** rose **7.9%** year-on-year in **September 2026** (provisional) – the highest since the new series (base **2022-23**) began in **April 2024** – led by **iron ore, electricity and coal**.

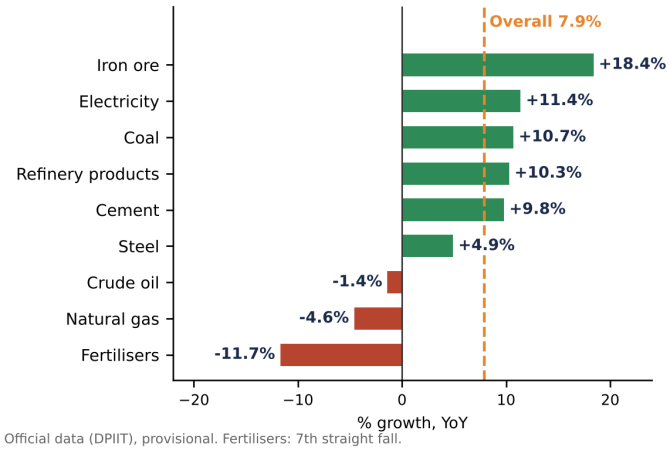
7.9%

Index of Eight Core Industries – September 2026 growth (YoY)

Highest since the new series (base 2022-23) began in April 2024; index 118.3 vs 109.6; April–September growth 5.1%.

Key Facts	■ Index at **118.3** vs **109.6** a year ago; **April–September** growth **5.1%** (vs 2.5%). ■ Gainers: **iron ore 18.4%, electricity 11.4%, coal 10.7%**, refinery products 10.3%, cement 9.8%, steel 4.9%. ■ Decliners: **fertilisers −11.7%** (7th straight fall), natural gas −4.6%, crude oil −1.4%. ■ August growth revised up to **5.9%** (from 4.8%). ■ Core industries form about **40% of IIP**; compiled by **Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT**.
Way Fwd	Sustain capex-led demand while fixing the fertiliser and gas supply crunch caused by West Asia disruptions.
Concept	**ICI** is a **lead indicator** of IIP, released monthly by DPIIT (Ministry of Commerce & Industry); **IIP** is released by **NSO, MoSPI**. Electricity, refinery products and steel together carry **71.1%** weight.

Core Industries, Sept 2026: by Component



Official data (DPIIT), provisional. Fertilisers: 7th straight fall.

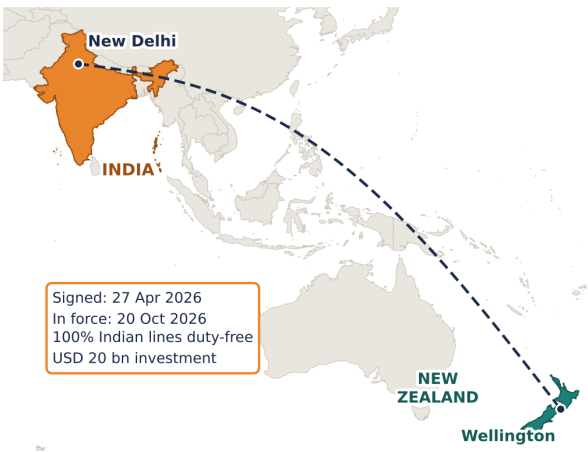
SECTION C | NATIONAL & WORLD — Polity, Economy, IR, Environment, Defence

India–New Zealand FTA enters into force: all Indian exports duty-free

IR **BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (IR & Indian Economy – Trade)**

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: India's trade agreements, external sector. Prelims: FTA partners, signing dates.
Context	The **India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement**, signed on **27 April 2026** at Bharat Mandapam, came into force on **20 October 2026** (Vijayadashami). The Commerce Ministry has begun **state-level outreach** to help farmers, MSMEs and exporters use new FTAs.
Key Facts	■ **100% of Indian tariff lines** enter NZ **duty-free**; NZ peak tariffs of up to **10%** removed. ■ NZ to facilitate **USD 20 billion** investment in India. ■ India shields **dairy, sugar, edible oils** and key farm goods; apples, kiwifruit, Manuka honey get **tariff-rate quotas**. ■ **5,000** temporary employment visas and **1,000** working holiday visas a year for Indians. ■ Bilateral goods trade only ~**USD 1.1 billion** (2025-26).
Way Fwd	Bihar's makhana, litchi and textiles exporters should use FTA outreach camps; keep dairy carve-outs firm.
Concept	An **FTA** cuts tariffs between partners only (vs **customs union** with a common external tariff). India exited **RCEP** talks in **2019** largely over **dairy** concerns – NZ was an RCEP member.

India–New Zealand FTA Takes Effect

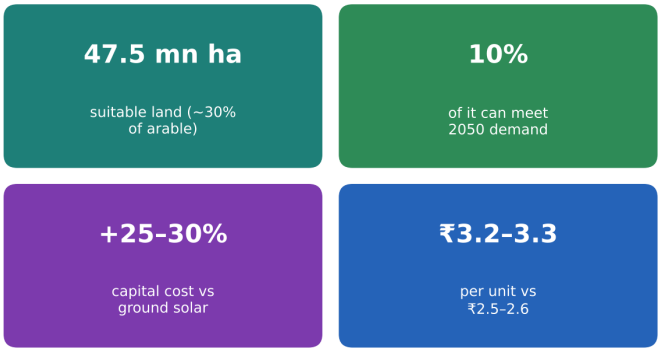


India hosts 7th Agrivoltaics World Conference; farmers as 'Urjadatas'

ENVIRONMENT **BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (S&T – Renewable Energy; Agriculture)**

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: science & technology in agriculture and energy; environment. Prelims: PM-KUSUM, solar targets.
Context	The **7th Agrivoltaics World Conference** is under way at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi (21–23 Oct)**. Union Minister **Pralhad Joshi** said agrivoltaics – growing crops under raised solar panels – may get a component in the **next phase of PM-KUSUM**.
Key Facts	■ Using **10%** of suitable land could meet India's projected **2050** power demand. ■ **~47.5 million ha** (≈**30%** of arable land) found suitable in a 2026 study. ■ Cost **25–30%** above ground-mounted solar; power at **₹3.20–3.30/unit** vs ₹2.5–2.6.
Way Fwd	Pilot agrivoltaics on Bihar's small farms with shade-tolerant crops (vegetables, makhana-adjacent ponds) and feeder solarisation.
Concept	**PM-KUSUM** (2019, MNRE): **A** – decentralised solar plants on farmland, **B** – standalone solar pumps, **C** – solarisation of grid pumps/feeders. India's target: **500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030**.

Agrivoltaics: Crops + Solar on One Field



RBI MPC minutes: first repo hike in over three years to 5.5%

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

Syllabus Linkage	GS-II: money and banking, inflation, RBI. Prelims: MPC composition, repo rate, inflation target.
Context	Minutes of the **5–7 October** MPC meeting show a **unanimous 25 bps hike** in the **repo rate to 5.5%**, but a split on changing the stance to **'calibrated tightening'** as price pressures from the West Asia conflict spread.
Key Facts	■ Governor **Sanjay Malhotra** sees headline CPI touching the **6% upper band in Q3**. ■ External members **Nagesh Kumar** and **Ram Singh** backed the hike but **dissented on the stance**. ■ **Core inflation 4.2%** in August (3.9% in July); WPI inflation **11.4%** in September.
Way Fwd	Coordinate fuel-tax and food-stock measures with monetary tightening so growth is not over-squeezed.
Concept	**MPC** (Sec **45ZB**, RBI Act 1934): **6 members** – 3 RBI + 3 Centre-nominated; Governor has **casting vote**. **Flexible inflation target: 4% ± 2%** (CPI).

SIMBEX-2026 at Visakhapatnam; ~₹770 cr BEL deal for anti-drone radars

DEFENCE BPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (IR, Defence & S&T)

Syllabus Linkage	Prelims: military exercises, defence PSUs. GS-II: India's Act East policy, indigenisation in defence.
Context	The **Singapore–India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX-2026)** is being held at **Visakhapatnam (21–26 Oct)**. On **21 Oct**, the Defence Ministry signed a contract with **Bharat Electronics Ltd** for **Improved Low-Level Light-weight Radars (LLLR-I)**.
Key Facts	■ SIMBEX began in **1994** as **Exercise Lion King**; harbour phase **21–23 Oct**, sea phase **24–26 Oct** in the **Bay of Bengal**. ■ Singapore's **RSS Supreme** joined; drills in **anti-submarine, anti-surface and anti-air** warfare. ■ **LLLR-I** (~**₹770 cr**) detects fighter-sized aircraft and **mini/micro drones**. ■ **IBSAMAR IX** (India–Brazil–South Africa) ended at **Simon's Town** on **20 Oct**.
Way Fwd	Deepen Indian Ocean maritime domain awareness and scale indigenous counter-drone systems after recent conflicts.
Concept	**Act East Policy** (2014) succeeded **Look East** (1991). **BEL** is a **Navratna** DPSU (HQ **Bengaluru**). Visakhapatnam hosts **Eastern Naval Command**.

SECTION D | PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

1. Bhojpuri folk singer **Manisha Srivastava** (Kargahar, **Rohtas**) wins **Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar 2025** of **Sangeet Natak Akademi** – the only Bihar awardee among **106**.

2. Governor **Syed Ata Hasnain** urges IFS officers to engage the **Bihari diaspora** via **Bihar Foundation**.

3. **AIIMS Patna** performs its **first kidney transplant under Ayushman Bharat (AB PM-JAY)**.

4. **Vikramshila Setu** (Bhagalpur, over **Ganga**) to get a **digital bridge health monitoring system**.

5. Asian Para Games, **Aichi-Nagoya (Japan)**: **Sheetal Devi–Toman Kumar** win archery **compound gold**.

6. **Army Commanders' Conference** (New Delhi, **21–23 Oct**): new **Land Warfare Doctrine** to be released.

SECTION E | PRACTICE CORNER

Prelims MCQs

Q1. With reference to State Legislative Councils, consider the following statements:
1. One-twelfth of members are elected by graduates of at least three years' standing residing in the State.
2. Teachers of primary schools form the electorate of Teachers' constituencies.
3. The total strength of a Council cannot exceed one-third of the Legislative Assembly's strength.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) — Under **Art. 171(3)(c)**, teachers' constituencies comprise teachers of institutions **not lower than secondary school** – so statement 2 is wrong. Statements 1 (Art. 171(3)(b)) and 3 (Art. 171(1)) are correct. Bihar Council has **75** seats.

Q2. The 'Index of Eight Core Industries', which grew 7.9% in September 2026, is compiled and released by:

(a) National Statistics Office, MoSPI **(b)** Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT **(c)** Reserve Bank of India **(d)** NITI Aayog

Answer: (b) — ICI is released monthly by the **Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT** (Ministry of Commerce & Industry); the **IIP** is released by **NSO, MoSPI**. The new ICI series uses base year **2022-23**.

Mains Practice (GS-II)

Q. "Women-led dairy cooperatives can be the next engine of rural prosperity in Bihar." Examine this statement in the light of the 'Sudha Sakhi' initiative. (BPSC Mains GS-II, ~250 words)

Hint: Intro: COMPFED/Sudha (Anand model) + Jeevika SHG base. Body: target 12 lakh → 50 lakh producers; Pashu Sakhi/Sudha Sakhi services (AI, vet first aid, feed); income diversification, nutrition, women's agency. Challenges: fodder, breed quality, cold chain, flood-prone north Bihar, fair price. Way forward: fodder banks, insurance, digital payments, convergence with Sahkar Se Samriddhi.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Revise: NH-22 Muzaffarpur–Sonbarsa ₹3,590.73 cr | Sudha Sakhi 12→50 lakh | Pension 88.37% verified | MLC 8 seats, Art. 171 | BLR Act 1950 Sec 4(h) | Core 7.9% | India–NZ FTA 20 Oct | Repo 5.5%.

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