CURRENT AFFAIRS — 8 OCTOBER 2026

Thursday, 8 October 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Prelims + Mains GS-wise digest

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UPSC CSE

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- RBI repo rate up **25 bps to 5.50%**; SDF **5.25%**, MSF **5.75%**; stance: **calibrated tightening**.
- RBI's FY27 projections: **GDP 7.1%**, **CPI inflation 5.2%**.
- **10th India Mobile Congress** (theme **'Scale Without Boundaries'**) opened by PM at **Yashobhoomi, New Delhi**.
- **57th GST Council** (8 Oct) discussed removing **arrest powers** and wider **ITC refunds**.
- Cabinet clears **₹10,000 crore SME Growth Fund** routed via **AIFs**.
- **ITLA** to appraise central transport projects of **₹500 crore+** and draft a **National Transport Master Plan**.
- **VB-G RAM G**: permissible works raised from **266 to 375** (**+41%**).
- **Living Planet Report 2026**: wildlife populations down **73%** since 1970; freshwater **−85%**.
- **Veerangana Durgavati TR (Nauradehi)** becomes MP's **third cheetah site**.
- **94th Air Force Day** (IAF founded **8 Oct 1932**); **Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit** named next CAS.

SECTION A • GS-III: SCIENCE & TECH | ECONOMY | SECURITY | ENVIRONMENT

PM inaugurates 10th India Mobile Congress — 'Scale Without Boundaries'

[SCI-TECH] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** — Science & Tech (telecom, IT), Cyber security. **Prelims**: DoT, COAI, 5G/6G, Telecom Act 2023.
Context	PM **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **10th India Mobile Congress (IMC 2026)** on **8 Oct 2026** at **Yashobhoomi, New Delhi**, naming **cybercrime and deepfakes** as big challenges and urging a **global framework against cyber fraud**.
Key Facts	• Organised by **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** and **Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI)**; runs **7–10 Oct 2026**. • Theme **'Scale Without Boundaries'**; 4 pillars — **Srishti, Samvardhan, Sashakt, Suraksha**. • **9 anchor sectors** incl. **5G & 6G**, AI networks, **semiconductors**, **non-terrestrial (satellite) networks**, **quantum communication**. • Expected **1.5 lakh+ visitors** from **100+ countries** and **600+ startups**. • PM: mobile phone has become a **tool of good governance** under **Digital India**.
Way Fwd	Real-time **telecom-bank fraud intelligence sharing**; push **Bharat 6G Vision** and trusted supply chains.
Concept	**Telecommunications Act, 2023** replaced the **Indian Telegraph Act, 1885**; allows **administrative allocation** of satellite spectrum. **Bharat 6G Vision (2023)** targets **6G by 2030**.

Indian Air Force turns 94 — Air Force Day celebrated at Hindon

[DEFENCE] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

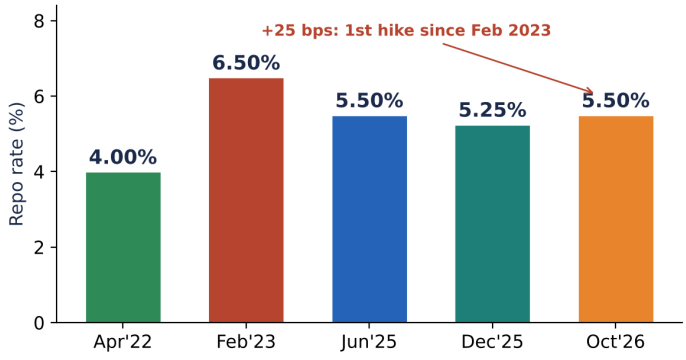
Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** — Security forces & their mandate. **Prelims**: IAF history, motto, exercises, appointments.
Context	The **94th Air Force Day** was observed on **8 Oct 2026** with main celebrations at **Hindon Air Force Station (Ghaziabad, UP)**; President **Droupadi Murmu** and the PM greeted air warriors, recalling **Operation Sindoor**.
Key Facts	• IAF was established on **8 October 1932**; 'Royal' prefix added in **1945**, dropped in **1950**. • **Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit** (VCAS since **1 Jul 2026**) named **29th Chief of the Air Staff** from **31 Oct 2026**, succeeding **ACM Amar Preet Singh**. • **Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026** (**2nd edition**, multinational) at **Jodhpur**, **26 Sep–12 Oct**. • IAF motto **'Nabha Sparsham Deeptam'** is taken from the **Bhagavad Gita**.
Way Fwd	Close the **fighter-squadron gap** (sanctioned **42**) via **Tejas Mk1A, AMCA**; speed up **theatre commands**.
Concept	**President** is Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces (**Art 53(2)**); service chiefs are appointed by the **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)**.

RBI hikes repo rate by 25 bps to 5.50%; stance turns 'calibrated tightening'

[ECONOMY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** — Monetary policy, inflation, growth. **Prelims**: MPC, policy corridor (SDF/MSF), inflation targeting.
Context	The **MPC (63rd meeting, 5–7 Oct)** under Governor **Sanjay Malhotra unanimously** raised the repo rate from **5.25% to 5.50%** on **7 Oct 2026** — the **first hike since February 2023** — as crude prices surged after a **West Asia** re-escalation.
Key Facts	• **SDF 5.25%**; **MSF & Bank Rate 5.75%**. • Stance vote **4–2** for **calibrated tightening** (two members preferred **neutral**). • **FY27 projections: GDP 7.1%, CPI 5.2%**; CPI seen peaking at **6.0% in Q3**. • Indian crude basket averaged **US$116.1/bbl in Sept** vs **US$82.0 in July**; monsoon ended **13% below LPA**. • Next MPC meeting: **2–4 Dec 2026**.
Way Fwd	Anchor inflation expectations without choking growth; **fuel-tax calibration** and supply-side steps must back monetary action.
Concept	**Flexible Inflation Targeting**: **4% CPI ± 2%**, set by **Centre** (Sec **45ZA**, RBI Act 1934, via **Finance Act 2016**); **6-member MPC** (Sec **45ZB**), Governor has **casting vote**.

Repo rate path: hike cycle → easing → hike



Cabinet clears ₹10,000 crore SME Growth Fund for equity to manufacturing SMEs

[ECONOMY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** — MSMEs, industrial growth, mobilisation of resources. **Prelims**: AIFs, MSME classification.
Context	The **Union Cabinet** (6 Oct) approved a **₹10,000 crore** Central commitment to an **SME Growth Fund (SGF)**, announced in **Budget 2026-27**, to give **patient growth equity** to high-potential SMEs and build future **'champion' enterprises**.
Key Facts	● Govt money flows through **SEBI-registered Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs)**, which invest in SMEs. ● **Majority** of allocation for **manufacturing**; also services, tech and strategic value chains. ● Focus on industrial clusters in **Tier-II and Tier-III cities**. ● MSME limits: **Small** — investment ≤ **₹25 cr**, turnover ≤ **₹100 cr**; **Medium** — ≤ **₹125 cr** / ≤ **₹500 cr**.
Way Fwd	Fast fund-manager selection, transparent deal flow and exits via **SME exchanges**; link with **credit guarantees**.
Concept	**AIF**: privately pooled fund under **SEBI (AIF) Regulations, 2012** (Cat I–III). Earlier model: **₹50,000 cr Self-Reliant India Fund (2020)**.

SME Growth Fund — numbers to remember

₹10,000 crore
Central commitment • routed via SEBI-registered AIFs

Small enterprise
Invest ≤ ₹25 cr
Turnover ≤ ₹100 cr

Medium enterprise
Invest ≤ ₹125 cr
Turnover ≤ ₹500 cr

Integrated Transport & Logistics Authority to unify planning across all modes

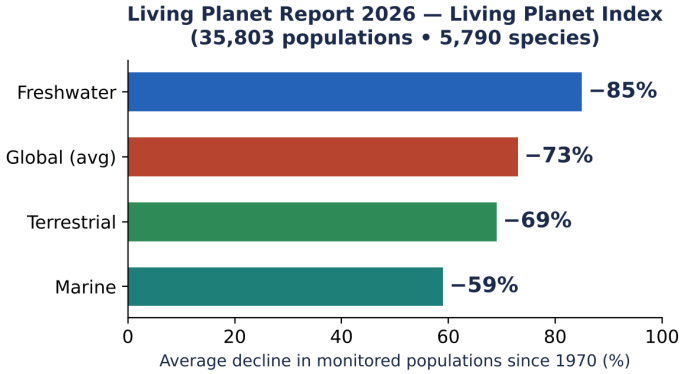
[ECONOMY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** — Infrastructure (roads, rail, ports, airports), logistics. **Prelims**: PM GatiShakti, NLP 2022, LPI.
Context	The Cabinet approved the **Integrated Transport & Logistics Authority (ITLA)** as a **Special Purpose Vehicle** and **apex body** for planning, appraisal, monitoring and data analytics across transport ministries, to end **siloed planning**.
Key Facts	● Will draft a long-term **National Transport Master Plan** — roads, rail, ports, aviation, inland waterways, coastal shipping, urban mobility. ● **Technical appraisal** of central projects **≥ ₹500 crore** (financial appraisal stays with existing bodies). ● Unified **transport data repository** from **GSTN e-way bills, FASTag, Vahan, GPS** data. ● Advises on updating the **National Logistics Policy, 2022**; India ranked **38th of 139** in **LPI 2023**.
Way Fwd	Clear role split with GatiShakti's **Network Planning Group**; data use compliant with the **DPDP Act, 2023**.
Concept	**PM GatiShakti NMP (Oct 2021) — 7 engines**: roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways, logistics infra. **NLP 2022** aims at **top-25 LPI** rank.

Living Planet Report 2026: monitored wildlife populations down 73% since 1970

[REPORT] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** — Conservation, biodiversity loss. **Prelims**: Living Planet Index, reports & their publishers.
Context	**WWF**'s biennial **Living Planet Report 2026** (7 Oct), based on the **Living Planet Index** of the **Zoological Society of London (ZSL)**, finds an **average 73% decline** in monitored vertebrate populations since **1970**.
Key Facts	● Based on **35,803 population trends** of **5,790 species**. ● **Freshwater −85%**, **terrestrial −69%**, **marine −59%**. ● Top driver: **habitat loss & degradation**, then overexploitation, climate change, pollution, invasive species. ● Bright spots: wild **tigers up ~70% (2010–2025)**; **green sea turtle** downlisted to **Least Concern**. ● 73% is an **average proportional change**, not 73% of animals lost.
Way Fwd	Deliver the **KMGBF '30x30'** target; prioritise **freshwater restoration** (wetlands, e-flows).
Concept	**Kunming-Montreal GBF (CBD COP15, 2022)**: **23 targets** for 2030 incl. protecting **30%** of land and sea. **WWF HQ: Gland, Switzerland**.



Project Cheetah: Veerangana Durgavati TR becomes MP's third cheetah home

[ENVIRONMENT] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** — Conservation, species reintroduction. **Prelims**: protected areas of MP, rivers, IUCN status.
Context	A pair of cheetahs from **Kuno NP** was released (7 Oct) into a **soft-release enclosure (boma)** at **Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve (Nauradehi)** — MP's **third cheetah site** after **Kuno** and **Gandhi Sagar WLS**.
Key Facts	● **~2,340 sq km** across **Sagar, Damoh, Narsinghpur** — MP's **largest tiger reserve** (notified **2023**). ● Lies in catchments of **Ken, Betwa and Narmada**; boma of **439 ha** in **5 sections**. ● Cheetah declared **extinct in India in 1952**; project launched **17 Sep 2022** with **8 cheetahs from Namibia**, then **12 from South Africa (2023)**. ● **Cheetah Steering Committee** cleared shifting **4** cheetahs to Nauradehi.
Way Fwd	Prey augmentation, leopard-conflict management and **community engagement** before landscape-level release.
Concept	Cheetah: **IUCN Vulnerable** (Asiatic subspecies **Critically Endangered**); project run by **NTCA**. MP's other cheetah sites: **Kuno (Sheopur)**, **Gandhi Sagar (Mandsaur–Neemuch)**.

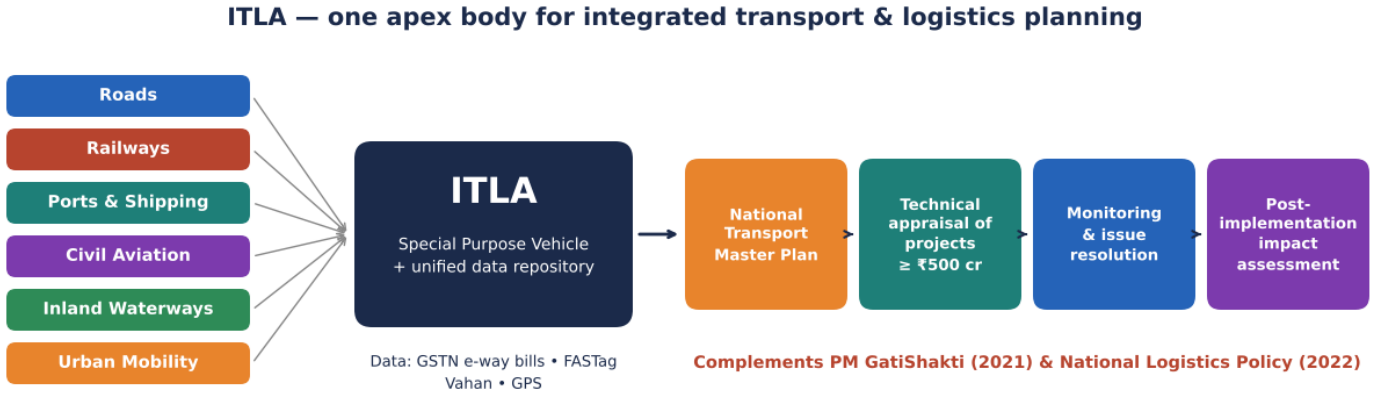


Fig: How ITLA integrates planning across transport modes (see the ITLA item)

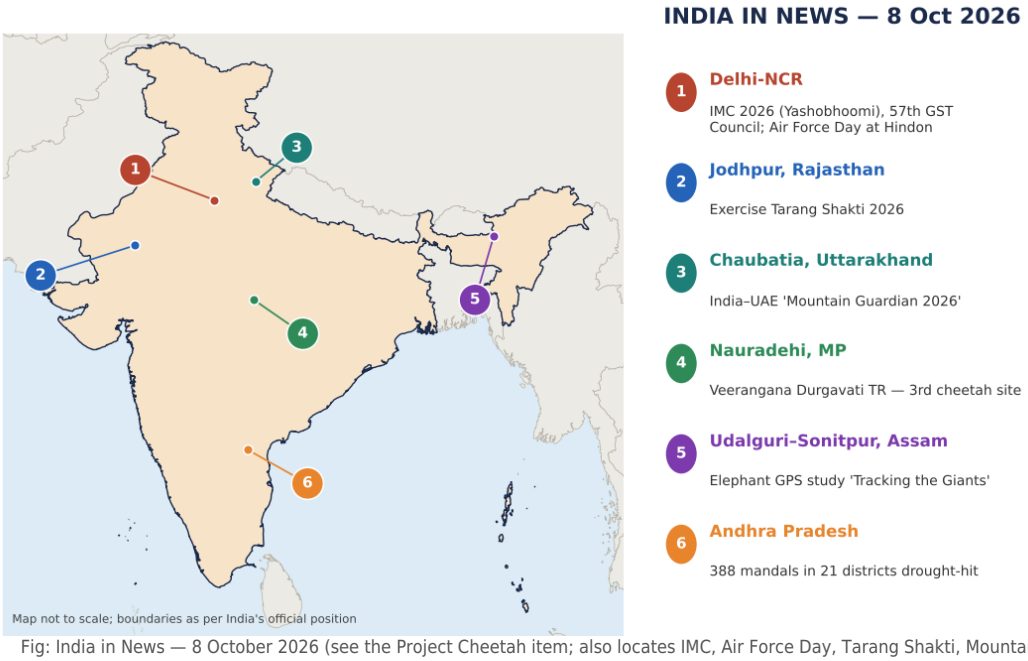


Fig: India in News — 8 October 2026 (see the Project Cheetah item; also locates IMC, Air Force Day, Tarang Shakti, Mountain Guardian)

Chemistry Nobel 2026 to Kagan & Soai for 'mirror-image' chemistry

[SCI-TECH] PRELIMS: GS3 Sci-Tech

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** — Developments in S&T. **Prelims**: chirality, enantiomers, catalysis, Nobel facts.
Context	The **Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences** awarded the **2026 Nobel Prize in Chemistry** (7 Oct) to **Henri B. Kagan (France)** and **Kenso Soai (Japan)** for discovering **non-linear effects and autocatalysis in asymmetric organic synthesis**.
Key Facts	● **Chirality**: molecules existing as non-superimposable **mirror images (enantiomers)**, like left and right hands. ● **Kagan (1986)**: a catalyst of modest purity can give a product of **higher enantiomeric purity** (non-linear effect). ● **Soai reaction (1990s)**: the product **catalyses its own formation** (asymmetric autocatalysis), amplifying one 'hand'. ● Explains **homochirality of life** (**L-amino acids**, **D-sugars**); prize money **12 million SEK**.
Way Fwd	India, a leading **generic & API** maker, should fund **chiral-synthesis R&D** alongside **PLI for bulk drugs**.
Concept	Earlier asymmetric-catalysis Nobels: **2001** (Knowles, Noyori, Sharpless) and **2021** (List, MacMillan — **organocatalysis**). **Thalidomide** tragedy showed why the right enantiomer matters.

SECTION B • ECONOMY DATA POINT

5.50% (+25 bps)

REPO RATE AFTER THE OCTOBER 2026 MPC

Why it matters: First hike since Feb 2023; FY27 projections — GDP **7.1%**, CPI **5.2%**. Policy corridor: SDF **5.25%** ← Repo **5.50%** → MSF **5.75%** (band of **50 bps**). Costlier **EMIs** and higher deposit rates aim to curb **second-round effects** of the oil shock and support the **rupee**.

SECTION C • GS-II: GOVERNANCE | POLITY | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

57th GST Council meets on 'GST 2.0' process reforms — arrest powers, ITC refunds

[POLITY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2/GS3

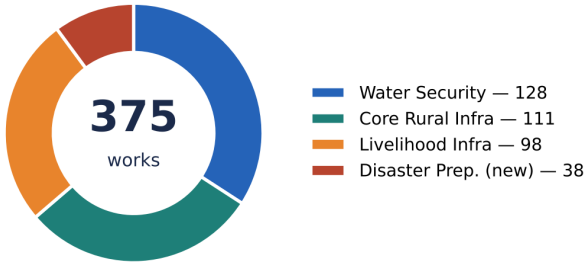
Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** — Federalism, constitutional bodies; **GS3** — Indirect taxation. **Prelims**: Art 279A, 101st Amendment.
Context	The **57th GST Council** met on **8 Oct 2026** at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, under FM **Nirmala Sitharaman**, focusing on the **process** leg of **GST 2.0** after the **September 2025 rate rationalisation**; rates are largely unchanged.
Key Facts	• Proposal to **remove GST officers' arrest powers**, keeping prosecution for wilful fraud — needs an **amendment by Parliament**. • Wider **ITC refunds** for **inverted duty** structure: input services now, **capital goods from April 2027**. • Easier **registration** for small **e-commerce** sellers; optional **annual return** for turnover up to **₹5 crore**. • Rate reviews proposed only **once a year**, effective **1 April**; some States flagged **revenue concerns**.
Way Fwd	Balance **trust-based compliance** with deterrence against **fake-invoice fraud**; settle disputes through **cooperative federalism**.
Concept	**Art 279A** (**101st CAA, 2016**): Council chaired by Union FM; decisions need **¾ majority** — Centre ⅓ vote weight, States ⅔. **Mohit Minerals (2022)**: recommendations are **persuasive, not binding**.

VB-G RAM G: Centre notifies 375 permissible rural works under four pillars

[SOCIETY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2/GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** — Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections; **GS3** — Rural employment, climate resilience. **Prelims**: scheme facts.
Context	The **Ministry of Rural Development** notified (5 Oct) **375 permissible works** under the **Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025**, up from **266** — a **41% expansion**.
Key Facts	• **Water Security 128**; **Core Rural Infrastructure 111**; **Livelihood Infrastructure 98**; **Disaster preparedness 38** (new). • Act **replaced MGNREGA (2005)**; in force from **1 Jul 2026**. • Guarantees **125 days** of wage work per rural household per year (MGNREGA: **100**). • Cost shared **60:40** (Centre:States) for most States, unlike fully Centre-funded wages earlier.
Way Fwd	Timely wage payment, robust **social audits**, and planning via **Gram Panchayat Development Plans** with GIS.
Concept	**Art 41 (DPSP)** — right to work; **11th Schedule (Art 243G)** lists rural subjects for Panchayats. Pillars link wages to durable, **climate-resilient assets**.

VB-G RAM G: permissible works (was 266, +41%)



Kaliningrad–Suwałki Gap: Russia accuses NATO of 'isolating' its Baltic exclave

[IR] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** — Effect of policies of developed countries on India; groupings. **Prelims**: Map — Baltic region.
Context	Moscow sent a **diplomatic note to NATO** accusing it of pressuring **Kaliningrad**, after a warning by Russia's President at the **Valdai Discussion Club (1 Oct 2026)**; NATO calls its Baltic posture **defensive**.
Key Facts	• **Kaliningrad**: Russian exclave (~**15,000 sq km**) between **Poland and Lithuania**; ex-**Königsberg**, given to USSR by the **Potsdam Agreement (1945)**. • Hosts Russia's **Baltic Fleet (Baltiysk)** and **Iskander** missiles. • **Suwałki Gap**: ~**100 km** Poland–Lithuania border strip between Kaliningrad and **Belarus** — NATO's only land link to the **Baltic states**. • **Finland (2023)** and **Sweden (2024)** joined NATO; India's **INS Tushil** and **INS Tamal** were built at **Yantar Shipyard, Kaliningrad**.
Way Fwd	India should uphold **strategic autonomy**, back dialogue, and **diversify defence supply chains**.
Concept	**NATO**: **Washington Treaty, 4 Apr 1949**; HQ **Brussels**; **32 members**; **Article 5** (collective defence) invoked only once — after **9/11**.

Kaliningrad & the Suwałki Gap

Blue = NATO members • Red = Russia • Purple = Belarus



India–UAE Exercise 'Mountain Guardian 2026' under way at Chaubatia

[DEFENCE] PRELIMS: GS2 IR + GS3 Security

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** — India & West Asia; **GS3** — Security. **Prelims**: bilateral military exercises.
Context	Joint military exercise **Mountain Guardian 2026** between the **Indian Army** and **UAE Army** is being held at the **Foreign Training Node, Chaubatia (Uttarakhand)** from **5 to 18 Oct 2026**.
Key Facts	• **92 personnel**, split equally; India from a **Bhairav Battalion**, UAE from a **Mountain Infantry Battalion**. • Focus: **mountain warfare**, **drone operations**, surveillance grids, rock-climbing, integrated field drills. • **Women officers and combatants** from both sides in specialist roles. • Other India–UAE drills: **Desert Cyclone** (armies), **Zayed Talwar** (navies).
Way Fwd	Use the **CSP (2017)** and **CEPA (2022)** to grow **defence co-production** and Gulf security cooperation.
Concept	**Bhairav Battalions**: agile light-commando units raised by the Army (2025) between regular infantry and Special Forces. **India-UAE CEPA** in force **1 May 2022**.

SECTION D • PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

Topic	Quick fact
Growth forecast	**World Bank** raised India's **FY27 GDP** forecast to **7.1%** (from **6.6%**) in its India Development Update.
Defence deal	MoD signed a **₹661.50 crore** contract with **BrahMos Aerospace** for ship-borne fire-control systems and launchers — **Buy (Indian-IDDM)**.
Drought	**Andhra Pradesh** declared **388 mandals in 21 districts** drought-hit.
Elephants	Assam GPS study '**Tracking the Giants**': **38,000+ GPS fixes**; tea gardens act as elephant pathways; Asian elephant — **Endangered (IUCN)**.
DRDO	DRDO's **High-Altitude Platform** flew to **21 km**; **AHAP** parachute made its maiden live jump at **Nyoma, Ladakh**.
Wildlife Week	**72nd Wildlife Week** (**2–8 Oct**) concludes; wildlife protection is a Fundamental Duty under **Art 51A(g)**.

SECTION E • PRACTICE CORNER

Q1. With reference to the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of India, consider the following statements: 1. It is constituted under the RBI Act, 1934, as amended by the Finance Act, 2016. 2. The RBI Governor has a casting vote in case of a tie. 3. The inflation target is fixed by the RBI in consultation with the MPC. 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) — The **inflation target** is set by the **Central Government in consultation with the RBI** (Sec **45ZA**), not by the RBI with the MPC; statements 1 and 2 are correct.

Q2. The 'Suwałki Gap', recently in the news, lies along the border between which of the following countries?

(a) Poland and Lithuania
(b) Lithuania and Latvia
(c) Poland and Belarus
(d) Estonia and Russia

Answer: (a) — The ~**100 km Suwałki Gap** runs along the **Poland-Lithuania** border, between Russia's **Kaliningrad** exclave and **Belarus**.

MAINS (GS3): Rising crude prices and a deficient monsoon have pushed the RBI back to rate hikes. Examine the effectiveness and limits of monetary policy in tackling supply-side inflation in India. (15 marks, 250 words)

Hint: Intro: **5.50% repo**, **FIT 4% ± 2%**. Body: role — anchoring **expectations**, second-round effects, rupee support; limits — food & fuel shocks, transmission lags, growth cost. Add fiscal/supply steps (fuel taxes, buffer stocks, imports). Conclude on **monetary-fiscal coordination**.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Repo **5.50%** (SDF 5.25 / MSF 5.75) | ITLA appraises **₹500 cr+** | VB-G RAM G **375 works**, **125 days** | LPR **−73%** (freshwater −85%) | GST Council = **Art 279A** | Suwałki Gap = **Poland-Lithuania**

Compiled & simplified by the StudyForGS.com Research Team
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