CURRENT AFFAIRS — 22 OCTOBER 2026

Thursday, 22 October 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Prelims + Mains GS-wise digest

StudyForGS.com
DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UPSC CSE

Top stories: Core sector hits new-series high of 7.9%, RBI minutes rule out near-term rate cuts, and India–Poland summit talks in New Delhi.

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

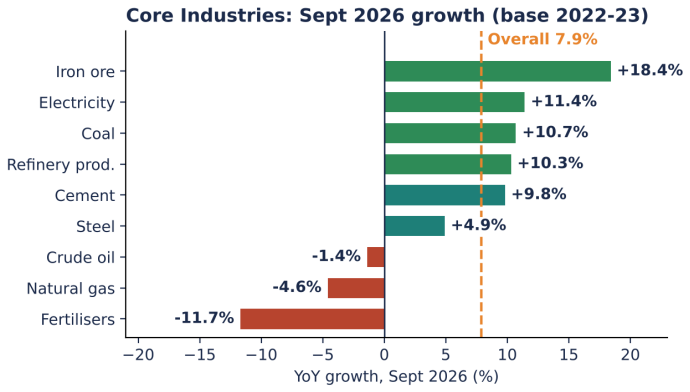
- **Core sector** grew **7.9%** in Sept 2026 — highest in the new **2022-23 base** series; iron ore **+18.4%**.
- RBI MPC minutes: **repo 5.5%** after a **25 bps hike**; rate cuts 'off the table' near term; next MPC **2–4 Dec**.
- India to mandate **1% SAF** blending for international flights from **2027**; **2%** by 2028, **5%** by 2030.
- Agrivoltaics: ~**47.5 Mha** (~**30%** of arable land) found suitable; may enter **PM-KUSUM 2.0**.
- **eMudhra** (Bengaluru CA): **8 intermediate keys** leaked; **6 TLS certificates** revoked.
- Exercise **IBSAMAR IX** (India–Brazil–South Africa) at **Simon's Town**; India sent **INS Tarkash**.
- NPPA overcharging dues: **₹8,447.4 crore** outstanding; **₹5,872.6 crore** stuck in litigation.
- PM Modi–**Donald Tusk** talks in New Delhi; India–Poland **Strategic Partnership** since **Aug 2024**.
- **Badr MoU** on defence manufacturing signed in **Doha** by **Türkiye, Qatar, Pakistan, Indonesia**.
- SC: converts to non-Hindu faiths **cannot carry pre-conversion caste** for backward-class quota.

SECTION A GS-III: Science & Tech • Economy • Environment • Security

Core Sector Growth Hits New-Series High of 7.9% in September

[ECONOMY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Indian economy, growth, industry, infrastructure. **Prelims**: Index of Core Industries, IIP weights, base year.
Context	Official data released on 21 Oct show the **Index of Core Industries (ICI)** rose **7.9% YoY** in **September 2026**, up from a revised **5.9%** in August — the fastest pace since the new series began.
Key Facts	■ **Iron ore +18.4%**, **electricity +11.4%**, **coal +10.7%** (rebound from −3.8% in Aug), **refinery products +10.3%**, **cement +9.8%**. ■ Contraction in **fertilisers (−11.7%)**, **natural gas (−4.6%)** and **crude oil (−1.4%)**. ■ **April–September 2026** cumulative growth: **5.1%** vs **2.5%** a year ago. ■ New series uses **base year 2022-23** and covers **9 industries** — **iron ore** newly added.
Way Fwd	Sustain capex-led momentum; address **fertiliser and gas output** slump through feedstock security and domestic exploration.
Concept	**ICI** is released monthly by the **Office of Economic Adviser, DPIIT (Commerce Ministry)**; core industries carry a large weight in the **IIP**, so ICI is a lead indicator of industrial output.



RBI MPC Minutes: Rate Cuts 'Off the Table' as Inflation Risks Widen

[ECONOMY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

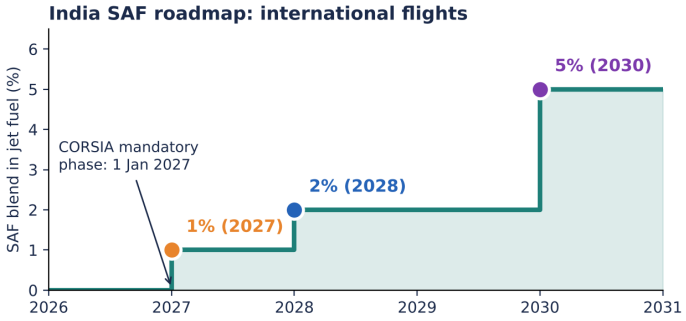
Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Monetary policy, inflation, mobilisation of resources. **Prelims**: MPC composition, repo rate, policy stance, flexible inflation targeting.
Context	Minutes of the **5–7 October** MPC meeting, released on 21–22 Oct, show members flagging **widening inflationary pressures** after the **unanimous 25 bps hike** that took the **repo rate to 5.5%**.
Key Facts	■ Minutes say **rate cuts are off the table** in the near term — only a **hike or a pause** is possible. ■ External members **Nagesh Kumar** and **Ram Singh** dissented on changing the **stance** towards tightening. ■ **Core inflation** rose to **4.2%** in August from **3.9%** in July; headline CPI projected near **5.8%** over the next three quarters. ■ Next MPC meeting: **2–4 December 2026**.
Way Fwd	Calibrate tightening to protect growth; strengthen **supply-side measures** (food, fuel) so monetary policy is not the only anti-inflation tool.
Concept	**MPC** (Sec 45ZB, **RBI Act 1934**): **6 members** — 3 from RBI incl. Governor (casting vote) + 3 external; **CPI target 4% ± 2%** under **flexible inflation targeting**.

India to Mandate 1% Sustainable Aviation Fuel for International Flights from 2027

[ENVIRONMENT] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Environment, conservation, energy, climate change. **Prelims**: SAF, CORSIA, ICAO, biofuels.
Context	India will require **1% Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)** blending in jet fuel for **international flights** from **January 2027**, aligning with the start of **CORSIA's mandatory phase**.
Key Facts	■ Indicative roadmap: **1% (2027) → 2% (2028) → 5% (2030)** for international flights. ■ **CORSIA** (ICAO) mandatory compliance begins **1 January 2027**. ■ DGCA moving towards **carbon-emissions reporting** for international flights. ■ SAF feedstocks: **used cooking oil, agri-residue, municipal waste**, alcohol-to-jet routes.
Way Fwd	Build domestic SAF capacity with **offtake guarantees**, feedstock aggregation and certification to avoid cost burden on air fares.

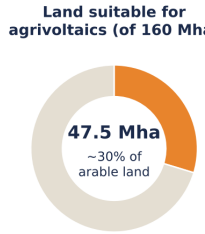
Concept	**CORSIA** = Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, adopted by **ICAO (2016)**; goal of **carbon-neutral growth** of international aviation from 2020 levels.

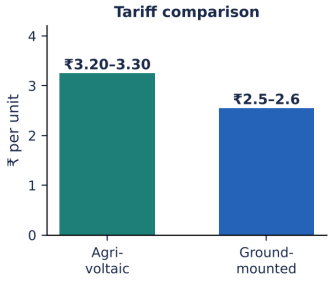


Agrivoltaics: Solar Panels over Farms Could Power India's 2050 Demand

[ENVIRONMENT] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Energy, infrastructure, agriculture, land use. **Prelims**: PM-KUSUM, agrivoltaics, renewable energy targets.
Context	Union MNRE Minister **Pralhad Joshi** said solar on **10% of suitable farmland** could meet India's projected **2050 power demand**; a policy framework is being drafted.
Key Facts	■ A July study found ~**47.5 million ha** — about **30%** of India's **160+ million ha** arable land — suitable. ■ Agrivoltaic plants cost **25–30% more** than ground-mounted solar. ■ Tariff: **₹3.20–3.30/unit** vs **₹2.5–2.6/unit** for ground-mounted solar. ■ Likely inclusion in next phase of **PM-KUSUM** (a **10 GW** agri-PV component announced earlier).
Way Fwd	Viability-gap support, **crop-specific design standards** and protection of farmer land rights to make 'Annadata to Urjadata' real.
Concept	**Agrivoltaics** = co-locating solar PV and crops on the same land (dual land use). **PM-KUSUM (2019)**: Component A (decentralised plants), B (standalone pumps), C (pump solarisation).

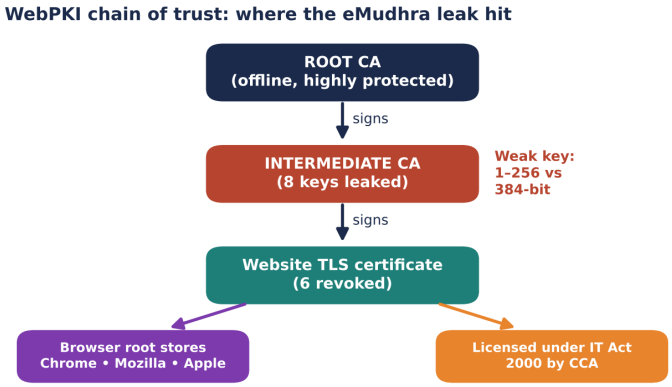




eMudhra Key Leak Exposes Weak Links in India's Digital Trust Chain

[SCI-TECH] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Cyber security, IT, challenges to internal security. **Prelims**: Certifying Authorities, digital signatures, TLS/SSL, IT Act 2000.
Context	**Eight private keys** of intermediate certificates issued by Bengaluru-based **eMudhra Ltd.** leaked; the keys used a number between **1 and 256** instead of a **384-bit** private key, making them guessable.
Key Facts	■ **6 affected TLS certificates** were trusted by **Chrome, Mozilla and Apple** root programmes; all **revoked**. ■ Government platforms incl. **UIDAI** and the **Income Tax portal** use eMudhra certificates/technology. ■ IT Ministry: **no sign of root certificate compromise**. ■ Recalls the **2014 'rogue' certificates** issued under the **NIC** CA, which still shapes global wariness.
Way Fwd	Mandatory **independent audits** of CA key-generation, **HSM-based key custody** and CERT-In incident disclosure norms for CAs.
Concept	**Controller of Certifying Authorities (CCA)** licenses CAs under the **IT Act, 2000**; **WebPKI** chain: **Root CA → Intermediate CA → end-entity (website) certificate**.



Exercise IBSAMAR IX: India, Brazil, South Africa Navies Drill at Simon's Town

[DEFENCE] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Security; **GS2** – Groupings involving India. **Prelims**: military exercises, IBSA, places in news.
Context	The **9th edition** of the trilateral maritime exercise **IBSAMAR** is concluding off **Simon's Town (False Bay), South Africa**, after beginning on **12 October 2026**.
Key Facts	■ India deployed stealth frigate **INS Tarkash** with an integral **Chetak** helicopter. ■ Brazil: **BNS Barroso**; South Africa: frigate **SAS Amatola**, submarine **SAS Manthatisi** and others. ■ Drills: **anti-submarine, anti-air, surface warfare**, maritime interdiction, **anti-piracy**, SAR. ■ Theme: '**Stronger Together Towards a Shared Future in the Maritime Domain**'.
Way Fwd	Use IBSA naval ties to anchor **South–South maritime security** linking the **Indian Ocean and South Atlantic**.
Concept	**IBSA Dialogue Forum** created by the **Brasilia Declaration (2003)**; **IBSAMAR** first held in **2008**. Simon's Town lies near the **Cape of Good Hope**.

SECTION B Key Economy Data Point of the Day

7.9%

Index of Core Industries growth, September 2026 (YoY)

Highest in the new **2022-23 base** series; up from **5.9%** in August; **April–September** cumulative **5.1%** vs **2.5%** a year ago.

SECTION C GS-II: Governance • Polity • International Relations

Modi–Tusk Talks: India and Poland Push Defence, Tech and Trade Ties

[IR] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Bilateral relations, India–EU, effect of policies of developed countries. **Prelims**: Strategic Partnerships, places in news.
Context	PM Modi held talks with Polish PM **Donald Tusk** in New Delhi on **22 October** during Tusk's **21–23 October** visit — his **second India visit as PM** after **2010**.
Key Facts	■ Ties elevated to **Strategic Partnership** during Modi's **August 2024** Warsaw visit (first Indian PM visit in **45 years**). ■ Agenda: **defence manufacturing**, trade & investment, **space**, AI, **renewable energy**, Russia–Ukraine. ■ Large business delegation; **India–Poland Business Forums** in **New Delhi (22 Oct)** and **Bengaluru (23 Oct)**. ■ Poland seeks to expand **defence exports** to India; visit also aids **India–EU** strategic partnership.
Way Fwd	Leverage Poland as a **gateway to Central Europe**; co-production under **Make in India** and conclusion of the **India–EU FTA**.
Concept	**'Dobry Maharaja'**: Jam Saheb **Digvijaysinhji of Nawanagar (Jamnagar)** sheltered ~1,000 Polish children in WWII; **Valivade (Kolhapur)** camp hosted ~5,000 Poles. Diplomatic ties since **1954**.

Badr MoU: Türkiye, Qatar, Pakistan and Indonesia Pool Defence Industries

[IR] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2

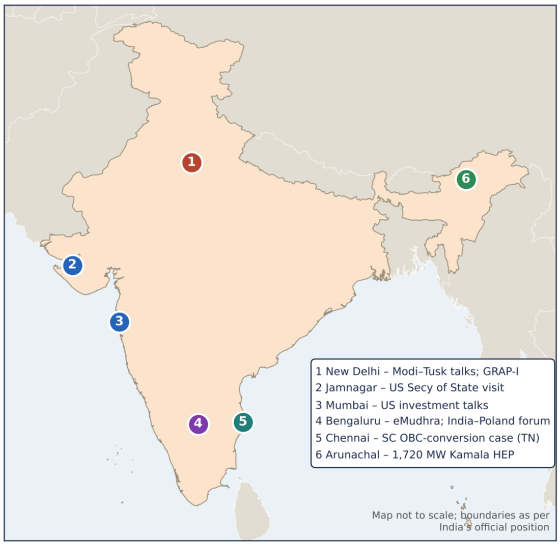
Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Effect of policies and politics of other countries on India's interests; **GS3** – Security. **Prelims**: groupings, places in news.
Context	**Türkiye, Qatar, Pakistan and Indonesia** signed the '**Badr**' Memorandum of Understanding in **Doha** on **21 October 2026** to cooperate in **defence manufacturing**.
Key Facts	■ Aims: **joint production**, **technology transfer**, technical training and **R&D**. ■ Expected roles: Türkiye — **technology & systems integration**; Pakistan, Indonesia — **manufacturing & workforce**; Qatar — **investment**. ■ It is an **industrial** pact, not a mutual-defence treaty. ■ Follows the **Mecca Joint Defence Agreement** (Aug 2026) of **Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye**.
Way Fwd	India should deepen ties with **Gulf and ASEAN partners**, expand defence exports and monitor Pakistan's **defence-industrial upgrading**.
Concept	**Minilateralism**: small, issue-based groupings (e.g., **I2U2, Quad, IBSA**). Name recalls the **Battle of Badr (624 CE)**.

India–US Trade Deal 'Pretty Close'; US Now India's Top LPG Supplier

[IR] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2/GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – India and its neighbourhood/major powers; **GS3** – External sector, energy security. **Prelims**: reciprocal tariffs, BTA.
Context	US President Trump said India and the US are '**pretty close**' to a trade deal, as Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** visited **Mumbai and Jamnagar** with an investment-and-energy focus.
Key Facts	■ **February 2026** framework for an interim deal: US reciprocal tariff to fall from **25% to 18%**; not yet signed. ■ US share of India's **LPG imports** rose from **under 10% to 67%** — now the **largest LPG supplier**. ■ India's goods exports to the US rose **21%** in August to **$8.3 billion**. ■ Sticking points: **agriculture**, energy purchases, competitive tariff vs rivals like **Vietnam**.
Way Fwd	Close the BTA's first tranche while safeguarding **farm interests**; diversify energy imports to cut **West Asia chokepoint risk**.
Concept	**BTA** = Bilateral Trade Agreement; **reciprocal tariffs** mirror partner duties. Jamnagar hosts the **world's largest single-site refining complex**.

India in News — 22 Oct 2026



SC: Converts Cannot Carry Pre-Conversion Caste into Backward-Class Quota

[POLITY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2

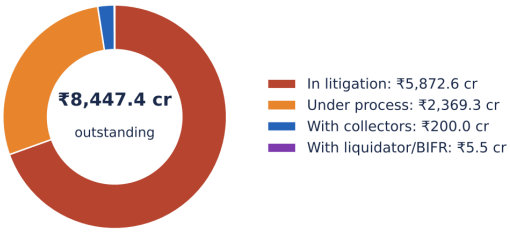
Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Indian Constitution, judiciary, welfare of vulnerable sections. **Prelims**: Art 15(4), 16(4), Constitution (SC) Order 1950.
Context	A Supreme Court bench of **Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Shree Chandrashekhar** (15 Oct) held that a **pre-conversion caste cannot be transposed** into the post-conversion social order — reopening the debate on religion-neutral OBC classification.
Key Facts	■ Upheld the **Madras High Court**; struck down **Tamil Nadu's 2024 G.O.** letting converts to Islam be certified as **Backward Class Muslims**. ■ Court: the **source of social backwardness** must be examined for converts claiming **Art 16(4)** benefits. ■ Conversion to a non-Hindu religion ends **SC status** under the **Constitution (SC) Order, 1950** (Sikhs, Buddhists excepted). ■ OBC lists have been broadly **religion-neutral** since **Indra Sawhney (1992)**.
Way Fwd	Evidence-based, **periodic revision of backward-class lists** by commissions; clarity via a larger bench to avoid conflicting state practices.
Concept	**NCBC** got constitutional status via the **102nd Amendment (2018), Art 338B**; the **105th Amendment (2021)** restored states' power to make their own **SEBC lists**.

Drug Overcharging: ₹8,447 Crore Owed to Consumers Remains Unrecovered

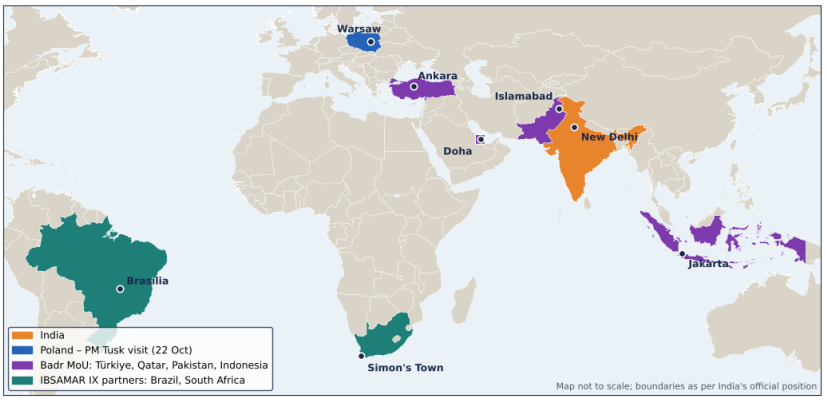
[HEALTH] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Health, government policies, regulatory bodies. **Prelims**: NPPA, DPCO 2013, NLEM, trade margin rationalisation.
Context	As of **31 March 2026**, the **NPPA** had demanded **₹10,029.8 crore** from drug firms for overcharging but realised only **₹1,582.4 crore**, leaving **₹8,447.4 crore** outstanding.
Key Facts	■ Of the dues, **₹5,872.6 crore** is in **litigation**, **₹2,369.3 crore** under process, **₹200 crore** referred to collectors. ■ Centre told SC (12 Oct) it will cap **trade margins at 30%** on **non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs**; next hearing **27 Oct**. ■ Medicines formed **₹6,368 of ₹32,884** per rural hospitalisation and **₹6,948 of ₹46,774** in urban areas. ■ No mechanism exists to **refund overcharged amounts** to consumers.
Way Fwd	Fast-track recovery via **special benches**, a **consumer refund fund** and wider trade-margin rationalisation.
Concept	**NPPA (1997)** under the **Department of Pharmaceuticals** enforces the **Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013**, issued under the **Essential Commodities Act, 1955**; ceiling prices apply to **NLEM** drugs.

NPPA overcharging dues (31 Mar 2026)



India & the World in News — 22 Oct 2026



Map linked to: Badr MoU: Türkiye, Qatar, Pakistan and Indonesia Pool Defence Industries — also shows Poland (PM visit) and IBSAMAR partners.

SECTION D Prelims Rapid-Fire

1	**GRAP Stage-I** enforced in Delhi-NCR by **CAQM** as AQI entered '**Poor**' (**201–300**) band.	2	NHPC seeks approval to fell **23 lakh+ trees** for the **1,720 MW Kamala HEP** (Kamala river, Subansiri basin), Arunachal Pradesh.
3	**Asian Para Games 2026** (Aichi–Nagoya, Japan): **Sachin Khilari** won gold in men's shot put **F46**, leading an Indian podium sweep.	4	**Nasha Mukt Bharat**: Centre targets a **drug-free India by 31 Dec 2029** with **NCORD**-based monitoring.
5	**Police Commemoration Day (21 Oct)** honours **10 CRPF** men killed at **Hot Springs, Ladakh (1959)**.	6	India–**New Zealand**: Memorandum of Cooperation on **electronic origin data exchange** to ease trade under the **FTA**.

SECTION E Practice Corner

Q1. With reference to the Index of Core Industries (ICI) in India, consider the following statements: 1. It is released by the National Statistics Office. 2. In the new series with base year 2022-23, iron ore has been included as a core industry. 3. Electricity has the lowest weight among the core industries.
\1 of the statements given above are correct?

(a) Only one **(b)** Only two **(c)** All three **(d)** None

Answer: (a) — Only statement 2 is correct. The ICI is released by the **Office of Economic Adviser, DPIIT**, not NSO, and **refinery products and electricity** carry among the highest weights, not the lowest.

Q2. CORSIA, recently in news in the context of India's Sustainable Aviation Fuel mandate, is associated with which of the following?

(a) International Maritime Organization **(b)** International Civil Aviation Organization **(c)** UNFCCC Green Climate Fund **(d)** International Energy Agency

Answer: (b) — **CORSIA** (Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation) was adopted by **ICAO in 2016**; its **mandatory phase starts in 2027**.

Mains Practice: Agrivoltaics can reconcile India's energy transition with food security, but only if farmers remain at the centre of its design. Discuss. (GS3, 15 marks, 250 words)

Hint: Define agrivoltaics → potential (**47.5 Mha**, 2050 demand) → benefits (dual land use, income, water saving) → challenges (**25–30% higher cost**, crop suitability, tenancy) → **PM-KUSUM 2.0**, VGF, standards → conclude with 'Annadata to Urjadata'.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Core sector **7.9%** (new high) • Repo **5.5%**, no cuts soon • **1% SAF** from 2027 under **CORSIA** • Poland = Strategic Partner since **2024** • **Badr MoU** = defence-industrial, not mutual defence.

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