CURRENT AFFAIRS — 26 OCTOBER 2026

Monday, 26 October 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Prelims + Mains GS-wise digest

StudyForGS.com
DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UPSC CSE

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Cyclone **Arnab** (name by **Bangladesh**) to make landfall near **Yanam** on **28 Oct** as a **VSCS**.
- **Operation Trident**: NCB searched **38 locations** in Assam, Mizoram, Manipur; **18 arrests**.
- PM inaugurated RBI's **₹169-crore** backup data centre near **Bhubaneswar**.
- Navy's **Swavlamban 2026** (5th edition) opens at **Manekshaw Centre**, New Delhi.
- **Sukhna** (Chandigarh) and **Sauj Jheel** (UP) take India to **103 Ramsar sites**.
- RAF companies sent to **Pasighat** amid protests over the **Siang Upper Multipurpose Project**.
- **Vigilance Awareness Week**: **26 Oct–1 Nov**, theme **"Probity for Prosperity"**.
- Liechtenstein's **Hereditary Prince Alois** on state visit; **India–EFTA TEPA** in focus.
- Free-bus States saw women's travel rise **6.6 points** (Time Use Survey 2019 vs 2024).
- Forex reserves at **$721 bn** (week ended **16 Oct**); gold at **$105.8 bn**.

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

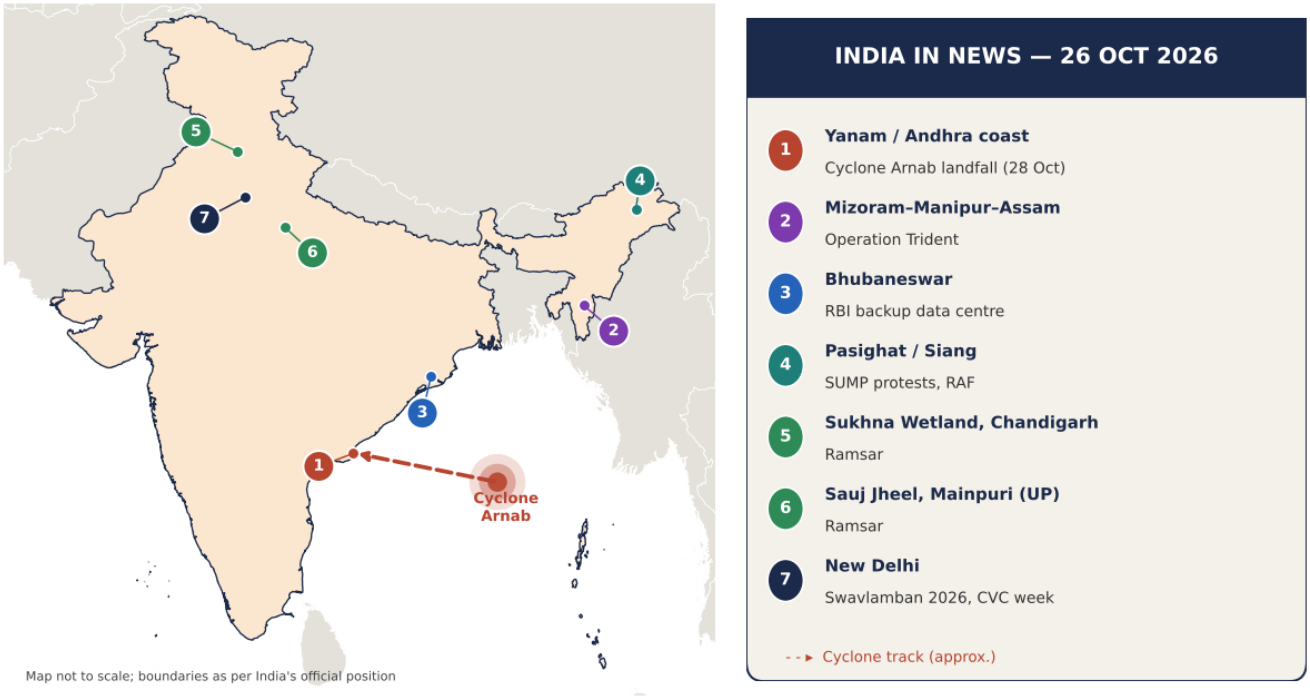


Fig A1: India in News — locator map for today's items (linked to Item A1, Cyclone Arnab)

A1. Cyclone Arnab to hit Andhra–Yanam coast on 28 October

[ENVIRONMENT] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS1/GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS1** – Important geophysical phenomena (cyclones); **GS3** – Disaster management. Prelims: IMD classification, cyclone naming.
Context	A deep depression over the **east-central Bay of Bengal** intensified into **Cyclonic Storm Arnab** on **26 Oct**. IMD has issued a **red alert** for coastal Andhra Pradesh, **Yanam** and south Odisha.
Key Facts	■ Landfall expected between **Bapatla and Visakhapatnam**, close to **Yanam**, by forenoon of **28 Oct** as a **Very Severe Cyclonic Storm**. ■ Winds **115–125 km/h**, gusting to **140 km/h**; storm surge **1.0–1.5 m** over East Godavari and Yanam. ■ Name **"Arnab"** was contributed by **Bangladesh** to the North Indian Ocean list. ■ Andhra Pradesh identified about **5.7 lakh** vulnerable people for evacuation; Odisha on high alert, fishing suspended till **28 Oct**.
Way Fwd	Pre-emptive evacuation, **impact-based forecasting** and resilient power/telecom lines (as in the **zero-casualty** approach) must guide the response.
Concept	**IMD scale**: Depression **31–49**, Deep Depression **50–61**, CS **62–88**, SCS **89–117**, VSCS **118–166**, ESCS **167–221**, Super Cyclone **≥222 km/h**. Names come from the **WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones** (13 members; list of **169** names adopted in **2020**). **Yanam** belongs to the UT of **Puducherry**.

A2. Operation Trident: NCB strikes drug-hawala network in North-East

[DEFENCE] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Linkages of organised crime with terrorism; security challenges in border areas; money laundering. Prelims: NDPS Act, Golden Triangle.
Context	On **23 Oct**, the **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** with the **ED** and State police searched **38 locations** in **Assam, Mizoram and Manipur**, targeting a cartel moving **methamphetamine and heroin** from Myanmar.
Key Facts	■ About **₹100 crore** in hawala transactions traced; **1,424** bank accounts frozen; property worth **₹17.82 crore** attached. ■ **18 arrests**; **500 detonators** and **₹12 lakh** cash seized — a sign of **narco-terror** overlap. ■ Route dubbed the **"Death Triangle Corridor"**: Myanmar → Mizoram → Manipur → Assam → Tripura/Bangladesh. ■ Government target: dismantle drug networks by **31 Dec 2029** under the **Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026–29)**.

Way Fwd	Convert freezes into **convictions and confiscation**; deepen **FIU-IND–ED–NCB** data-sharing and **BIMSTEC**-level cooperation with Myanmar and Bangladesh.
Concept	**NDPS Act, 1985** (Sec **27A**: financing illicit traffic); **NCB** set up in **1986**; **Article 47** (DPSP) on prohibition of harmful drugs. **Golden Triangle** = Myanmar–Laos–Thailand; **Golden Crescent** = Afghanistan–Iran–Pakistan. India–Myanmar border ≈ **1,643 km**; **Free Movement Regime** allowed **16 km** visa-free movement.

A3. RBI's ₹169-crore backup data centre opens near Bhubaneswar

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

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Cyber security; Indian economy and banking. Prelims: RBI institutions, CERT-In, NCIIPC.
Context	The PM inaugurated RBI's **Greenfield Data Centre** and the **Enterprise Computing & Cybersecurity Training Institute** in **Odisha** on **25 Oct**, calling financial-sector cyber threats a **national security** issue.
Key Facts	■ Cost **₹169 crore**; **18.55-acre** campus at **Info Valley-II, Khordha** district. ■ Acts as **backup** to RBI's primary data centre at **Kharghar, Navi Mumbai**; supports payments, currency management and regulatory data. ■ Site chosen for **seismic stability** and distance from border zones and subsea-cable landing points. ■ Foundation stone laid on **22 March 2023**.
Way Fwd	Pair hard infrastructure with **skilled cyber manpower**, regular **red-team drills** and a sector-wide **CSIRT-Fin** response protocol.
Concept	**CERT-In** – national nodal agency for cyber incidents under **Sec 70B, IT Act 2000**; **NCIIPC** protects critical information infrastructure under **Sec 70A**. A **Disaster Recovery (DR)** site ensures **business continuity** of payment systems.

A4. Swavlamban 2026: Navy's 5th innovation & indigenisation seminar

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

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Indigenisation of technology; defence technology. Prelims: iDEX, DIO, naval programmes.
Context	The **fifth edition** of the Indian Navy's **Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Seminar** opened on **26 Oct** at the **Manekshaw Centre**, New Delhi (till **27 Oct**), with the Raksha Mantri at the plenary.
Key Facts	■ Documents released: **Swavlamban 5.0**, **Compendium on Technology Imperatives** and **NAUSETU** interface standards. ■ Focus areas: **maritime surveillance**, **counter-UAS**, **AI & quantum**, **NBCD** and safety enhancers. ■ Series began in **2022**; aims to turn start-up/MSME innovations into **deployable** capabilities via **iDEX**. ■ Separately, DRDO-NMRL's **AIP** module entered **Setting-to-Work-2** at Hazira for a **Kalvari-class** submarine.
Way Fwd	Assured **procurement orders**, faster trials and open **interface standards** are key to moving prototypes into the fleet.
Concept	**iDEX** (Innovations for Defence Excellence, **2018**) is run by the **Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO)** under the **Department of Defence Production**. **AIP** (Air Independent Propulsion) lets conventional submarines stay submerged longer.

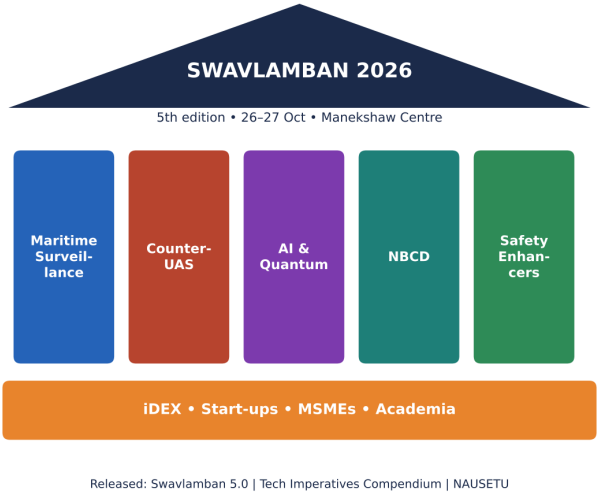


Fig: Swavlamban 2026 — focus pillars (Item A4)

A5. Sukhna and Sauj Jheel take India's Ramsar tally to 103

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

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation. Prelims: Ramsar Convention, Montreux Record, Wetland Rules 2017.
Context	**Sukhna Wetland** (Chandigarh) and **Sauj Jheel** (Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh) were designated on **15 Oct**, raising India's Ramsar sites to **103** — up from **26** in **2014**.
Key Facts	■ Network covers **13.87 lakh ha** across **28 States/UTs**; India is **1st in Asia** by number of sites. ■ **Tamil Nadu** has the most sites (**20**), followed by **Uttar Pradesh** (**14**). ■ Largest site: **Sundarban Wetland** (WB, ~**4.23 lakh ha**); **Surha Tal** (UP) was the **100th** site (June 2026). ■ **Sukhna** is an artificial lake (**1958**) at the foothills of the **Shivaliks**.
Way Fwd	Designation is not protection: notify every site with a time-bound **Integrated Management Plan** and adopt a **catchment-to-coast** approach.
Concept	**Ramsar Convention** signed **2 Feb 1971** at Ramsar, **Iran**; India joined **1 Feb 1982** (first sites **Chilika** & **Keoladeo**, 1981). **Montreux Record** now lists **Keoladeo** and **Loktak**. Domestic law: **Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules, 2017** under the **EPA, 1986**.

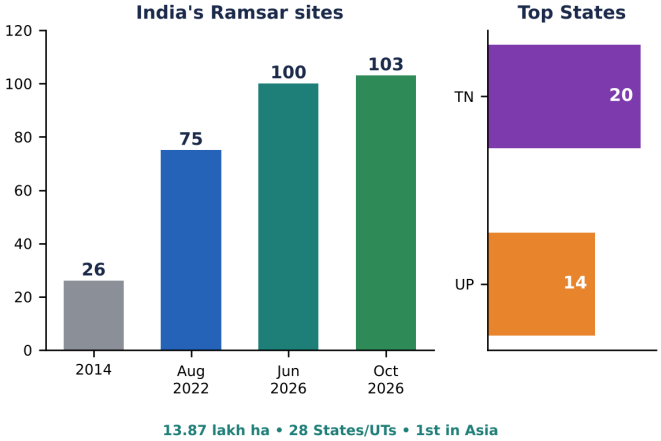


Fig: Growth of India's Ramsar network (Item A5)

A6. Siang mega-dam protests: RAF deployed in Arunachal

[ENVIRONMENT] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS1/GS3**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS3** – Infrastructure (energy), environment, internal security; **GS1** – Distribution of water resources. Prelims: Brahmaputra system.

Context	The Centre sent **two RAF companies** (~**250** personnel) to **Pasighat** after violent protests against the proposed **~11,000 MW Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP)**; a **12-hour bandh** was observed in the Siang belt.
Key Facts	■ Locals (largely **Adi** community) fear **displacement**, submergence and seismic risk; residents have blocked the **Pre-Feasibility Report** survey. ■ Centre sees SUMP as a **strategic buffer** against China's **~60,000 MW Medog** project on the **Yarlung Tsangpo**. ■ State's sequence: **PFR → SIA → EIA → DPR**, before any final decision.
Way Fwd	Build **free, prior and informed consent** through dialogue, transparent **SIA/EIA** and benefit-sharing; avoid securitising local dissent.
Concept	The **Siang** is the **Yarlung Tsangpo** after it enters India in Arunachal; it becomes the **Brahmaputra** after the **Dibang** and **Lohit** join near **Sadiya**. **RAF** is a specialised riot-control wing of the **CRPF**, raised in **1992**. **FRA, 2006** mandates Gram Sabha role in forest diversion.

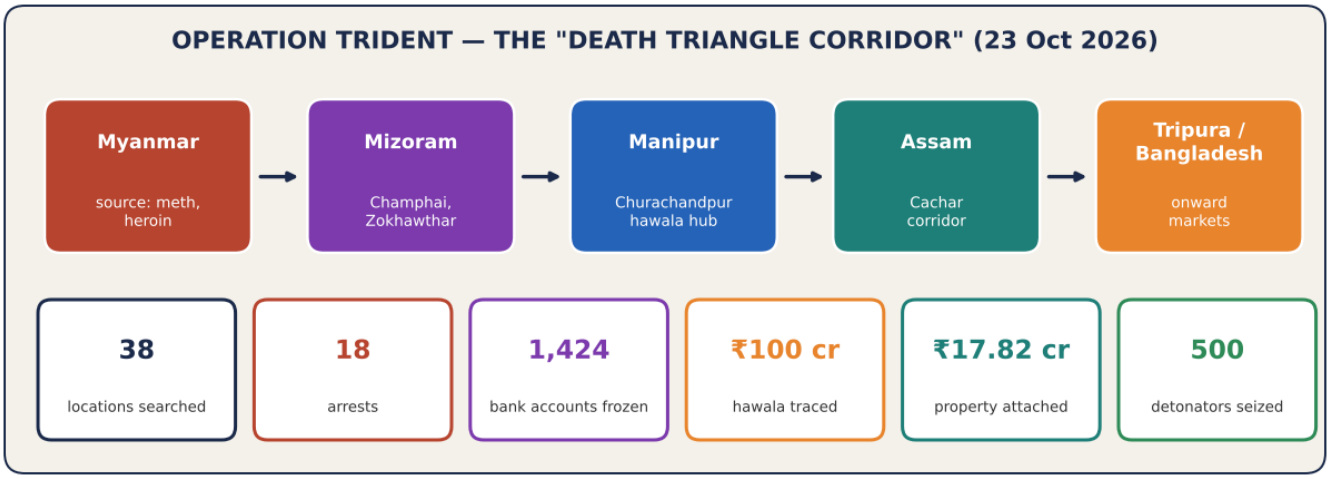


Fig A2: Operation Trident — corridor and numbers (linked to Item A2)

SECTION B • ECONOMY DATA POINT OF THE DAY

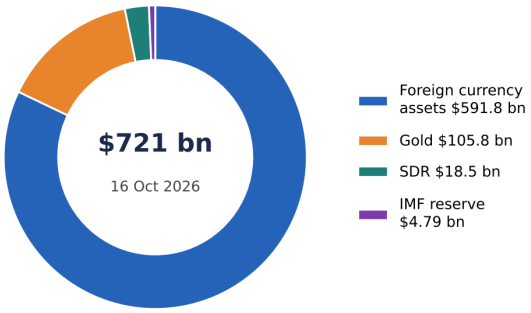
India's foreign exchange reserves (week ended 16 Oct 2026)

$721 bn

Down about **$5 bn** in the week — the third straight weekly fall in October. **FCA $591.8 bn**, **gold $105.8 bn** (up **$706 mn**), **SDR $18.5 bn**, **IMF reserve position $4.79 bn**.

Concept: Reserves = **FCA + Gold + SDR + Reserve Tranche Position (IMF)**; managed by the **RBI** under the **RBI Act, 1934** and FEMA, 1999. Falling FCA often reflects **RBI intervention** to curb rupee volatility plus valuation changes.

Forex reserves: composition



SECTION C • GS-II: Governance, Polity, IR & Social Justice

C1. Vigilance Awareness Week 2026: "Probity for Prosperity"

[POLITY] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2/GS4**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Statutory bodies, transparency & accountability; **GS4** – Probity in governance. Prelims: CVC.
Context	The **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)** began **Vigilance Awareness Week** on **26 Oct** (till **1 Nov**) with the **integrity pledge**, under the theme "**Probity for Prosperity**".
Key Facts	■ Precedes a **3-month preventive vigilance campaign** (**17 Aug–16 Nov 2026**) in ministries, PSBs and PSUs. ■ Campaign focus: disposal of pending complaints, **cyber hygiene**, transparent procurement on **GeM** and contract management. ■ Week is observed around **Sardar Patel's birth anniversary** (**31 Oct**, Rashtriya Ekta Diwas).
Way Fwd	Shift from punitive to **preventive vigilance**: e-procurement, **faceless** processes and protection for **whistle-blowers**.
Concept	CVC set up in **1964** on the **K. Santhanam Committee** recommendation; statutory status by the **CVC Act, 2003**. Multi-member body (CVC + up to **2** VCs) appointed by the **President** on recommendation of a panel of **PM, Home Minister and LoP (Lok Sabha)**; term **4 years** or age **65**.

C2. India rebuts Pakistan at UN, blames it for stalled SAARC

[IR] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – India and its neighbourhood; regional groupings; important international institutions. Prelims: SAARC, UN Special Procedures.
Context	At a UN dialogue with the **Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues**, India's First Secretary **Raghoo Puri** said Pakistan's "**Form 47**" government does not override its military, the country's "**real rulers**".

Key Facts	■ "**Form 47**" alludes to disputed results of Pakistan's **February 2024** general election. ■ India blamed Pakistan for SAARC's paralysis since the **19th Summit (Islamabad, 2016)** was called off after the **Uri attack**. ■ India's regional focus has shifted to **BIMSTEC** and the **Neighbourhood First** policy.
Way Fwd	Keep exposing **cross-border terrorism** at multilateral fora while deepening **sub-regional** connectivity (BBIN, BIMSTEC).
Concept	**SAARC** founded **8 Dec 1985** at **Dhaka**; **8** members (Afghanistan joined **2007**); Secretariat at **Kathmandu**. **UN Special Rapporteurs** are independent experts under the **Human Rights Council's Special Procedures**.

C3. Liechtenstein's Hereditary Prince on state visit; EFTA ties in focus

[IR] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2/GS3**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Bilateral agreements affecting India's interests; **GS3** – Investment models. Prelims: EFTA, TEPA, map of Europe.
Context	**Hereditary Prince Alois**, acting Head of State of **Liechtenstein**, is on a **state visit (25–28 Oct)**; talks with the PM at **Hyderabad House** are due on **27 Oct**.
Key Facts	■ **India–EFTA TEPA**: signed **10 March 2024**, in force from **1 October 2025**. ■ EFTA committed **$100 bn** investment over **15 years** and **10 lakh** direct jobs — India's first FTA with a binding investment pledge. ■ India–Liechtenstein diplomatic ties since **1993**; this is the Prince's second India visit of 2026.
Way Fwd	Use TEPA's investment desk to channel **precision engineering, fintech and green-tech** capital into manufacturing.
Concept	**EFTA** (1960) = **Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland** — none are EU members. **Liechtenstein** (capital **Vaduz**), between Switzerland and Austria, is one of only two **doubly landlocked** countries (with **Uzbekistan**).

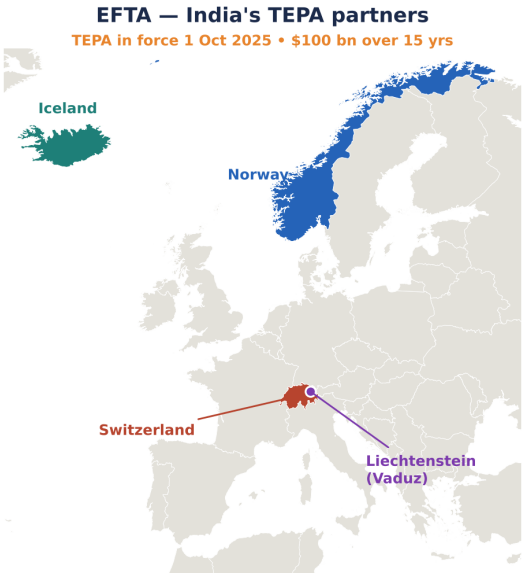


Fig: EFTA members — India's TEPA partners (Item C3)

C4. Free bus travel lifts women's mobility: Time Use Survey data

[SOCIETY] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS1/GS2**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS1** – Role of women, social empowerment; **GS2** – Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections. Prelims: NSO Time Use Survey.
Context	An analysis of **NSO Time Use Surveys (2019 vs 2024)** shows that free government-bus travel for women in **Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Telangana** raised women's mobility faster than in other large States.
Key Facts	■ Women (15–59) making at least one trip: **38.7% → 45.3%** (+**6.6** pts) in free-bus States; men only +**3.7**. ■ In **12 other large States**, women +**4.4** pts vs men +**7.6** — the gender gap widened there. ■ **Telangana** (Mahalakshmi, Dec 2023): **43.7% → 54.6%**; **Andhra Pradesh** (scheme only from Aug 2025): **40.8% → 41.6%**. ■ **Care-related trips** nearly tripled; paid-work trips rose **2.3** pts vs **1.2** elsewhere.
Way Fwd	Back fare-free travel with **more buses, safe last-mile** links and fiscal support to State transport corporations.
Concept	**Time Use Survey** by **NSO (MoSPI)**: first in **2019**, second in **2024**; measures paid and **unpaid care work**. Scheme names: Karnataka **Shakti** (June 2023), Telangana **Mahalakshmi**, Tamil Nadu **Vidiyal Payanam**.

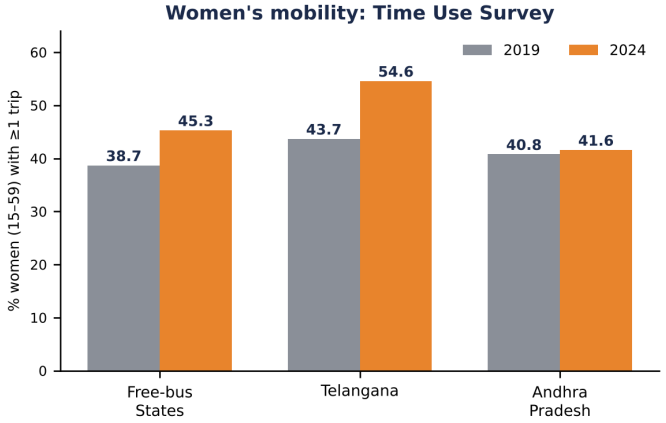


Fig: Women's mobility, 2019 vs 2024 (Item C4)

C5. DPDP rules and health data: hospitals face compliance test

[HEALTH] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2**

Syllabus Linkage	**GS2** – Issues relating to health; government policies; **GS3** – IT and data. Prelims: DPDP Act terms, ABDM.
Context	With **consent-manager** provisions of the **DPDP Rules** taking effect on **13 Nov 2026**, experts flag that small hospitals and PHCs may struggle with compliance costs.
Key Facts	■ **DPDP Act 2023**; Rules notified **13 Nov 2025**; most obligations apply from **13 May 2027**. ■ Patient = **Data Principal**, hospital = **Data Fiduciary**, vendors = **Data Processors**. ■ Penalty up to **₹250 crore** for failing reasonable security safeguards. ■ Out-of-pocket spending is **43.4%** of total health expenditure (NHA 2022-23) — costs may pass to patients.
Way Fwd	Offer **shared compliance infrastructure** via the **ABDM** and the Unified Health Interface instead of each facility building its own.
Concept	**Data Protection Board of India** adjudicates breaches under the DPDP Act. **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission** (launched **27 Sept 2021**) issues the **ABHA** health ID. Clinical consent for treatment ≠ consent for data reuse.

SECTION D • PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

J&K Accession Day (26 Oct)	Maharaja **Hari Singh** signed the Instrument of Accession on **26 Oct 1947**; **Infantry Day** is **27 Oct**.
Asian Para Games 2026 (Aichi-Nagoya, Japan)	India's record **114 medals** — **30 gold, 35 silver, 49 bronze**.
Mann Ki Baat	**139th episode** aired on **25 Oct**; programme began on **3 Oct 2014**.
CBD COP17	Under way at **Yerevan, Armenia** (**19–30 Oct**); reviews the **Kunming-Montreal GBF** (23 targets for 2030).
Digital Agriculture Mission	**11 crore Farmer IDs** created under **AgriStack**, ahead of the **31 Mar 2027** target.
Mission Mausam	**AATAL** lab at **IITM** Delhi to trace Delhi-NCR pollution sources, linked to the **AIRWISE** forecast system.

SECTION E • PRACTICE CORNER

Q1. With reference to wetlands in India, consider the following statements:
1. India now has 103 Ramsar sites, the highest number in Asia.
2. Keoladeo National Park and Loktak Lake are currently on the Montreux Record.
3. The Ramsar Convention is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
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) — Statements 1 and 2 are correct. Statement 3 is wrong: the Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental treaty **outside the UN system**, with its Secretariat at **Gland, Switzerland** and **UNESCO** as depositary.

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean:
1. Names are drawn from a list adopted by the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones.
2. A 'Very Severe Cyclonic Storm' has maximum sustained winds of 118–166 km/h.
3. Yanam, near the landfall zone of Cyclone Arnab, is a part of Andhra Pradesh.
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) — Statements 1 and 2 are correct. **Yanam** is an enclave of the Union Territory of **Puducherry**, surrounded by Andhra Pradesh's East Godavari region.

MAINS PRACTICE (GS-III)

"Disrupting the money trail is now as important as seizing drugs." Examine this statement in the context of narco-trafficking in India's North-East. (15 marks, 250 words)

Hint: Intro: Golden Triangle proximity and Operation Trident numbers. Body: hawala as backbone, NDPS Sec 27A and PMLA tools, narco-terror link (detonators), limits — low conviction rates, porous border, FMR and community ties. Conclude with financial intelligence sharing, regional cooperation and demand reduction (Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan).

ONE-LINE REVISION: Arnab (Bangladesh name) → Yanam, 28 Oct | Trident: 38 sites, 1,424 accounts | Ramsar 103 | RBI DC ₹169 cr | CVC week: Probity for Prosperity | EFTA TEPA $100 bn/15 yrs

Compiled & simplified by the StudyForGS.com Research Team

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