

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

PART I · HEADLINES TO ECONOMY

Morning Edition · 08:00 IST

Tuesday, 13 October 2026

“The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning.”

Published by TheIAS Akademia · theiasakademia.com

Today's Headlines at a Glance

12 stories, screened through the Substance Test — every one maps to a full card ahead.

- 1 **GS2** Supreme Court dismisses a non-member's PIL challenging a Speaker's condonation of 21 MLAs under the Tenth Schedule's anti-defection law — see Polity Card 1.
- 2 **GS2** A 24-hour, unpublished internet suspension order in New Delhi revives the *Anuradha Bhasin* “Published, Proportionate, Periodically-reviewed” test — see Polity Card 2.
- 3 **GS2** Rajya Sabha Standing Committee's 382nd Report finds the National Testing Agency only 23-of-39 staffed and demands a statutory overhaul post-NEET-UG 2026 — see Polity Card 3.
- 4 **GS2** India and Nepal restart boundary talks on Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura even as India-China plans to reopen Lipulekh draw a Nepali protest — see IR Card 1.
- 5 **GS2/GS3** India's Chabahar sanctions waiver lapses; a stake transfer to an Iranian entity is reportedly under consideration — see IR Card 2.
- 6 **GS3** Army signs a 5-year MoU with FCI for “Bharat Rice”, explicitly framing logistics as combat power after Operation Sindoor — see Defence Card.
- 7 **GS3** ISRO's NVS-03 nears launch to restore NavIC to the 4-satellite minimum needed for standalone positioning — see S&T Card 1.
- 8 **GS3** India's first mega semiconductor fab will open on the mature 90nm node, not the originally flagged 28nm, as SEMICON India 2026 scales the Mission to ₹1,27,500 crore — see S&T Card 2.
- 9 **GS3** NSO's draft guidelines ask states to compile GSDP via the expenditure approach for the first time — and finds zero states currently estimate private consumption spending — see Economy Card 1.
- 10 **GS3** An RBI working paper reconstructs India's missing 2020-21 state-wise inflation data using household inflation-expectations survey data — see Economy Card 2.
- 11 **GS3** Fall Armyworm, the invasive pest first detected in Karnataka in 2018, remains a live case study in pest biosecurity and integrated pest management — see Environment Card 1.

THEIAS AKADEMIA

Today's Polity cluster (anti-defection standing, internet-suspension proportionality, NTA governance) is exactly the kind of institutional-reasoning terrain our **Sahyog Mentorship** programme drills every week through live doctrine-mapping sessions — theiasakademia.com

Polity & Governance

3 cards — capped at Rule 16.1's ceiling of 3; a fourth candidate (Law Officer Appointment/Chahal Doctrine) was dropped as the narrowest of four qualifying stories and is logged for tomorrow's blacklist.

GS2
Tenth Schedule • Anti-Defection Law • Kihoto Hollohan Doctrine

9 October 2026 · Source: Supreme Court of India (SLP(C) No. 34136/2026, order reported via court-reporting outlets)

Anti-Defection Standing & Condonation: Supreme Court Shuts the Door on Outsider Challenges to a Speaker's Tenth Schedule Call

Why in News: On 9 October 2026, a Supreme Court bench of the CJI and two companion Justices dismissed a PIL (*P.V. Selvakumar v. Speaker, Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly*) challenging the Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker's decision to drop Tenth Schedule disqualification proceedings against 21 AIADMK MLAs who had cross-voted for the state government in a 13 May 2026 confidence motion against a party whip. The 21 MLAs were “condoned” by their own party within the Tenth Schedule's 15-day window, after which the Speaker closed the file; a party member (not an MLA) then petitioned the courts. The Court held the petitioner lacked standing because the grievance belonged to the party or its authorised representative, not an outside member, and left the underlying legal questions open for a future case brought by the right party.

Background: The Tenth Schedule, inserted by the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985, disqualifies a legislator either for voluntarily giving up party membership (Para 2(1)(a)) or for voting/abstaining against a party whip (Para 2(1)(b)) — but Para 2(1)(b) carries an explicit proviso allowing the party to condone such conduct within 15 days. Para 6 makes the Speaker or Chairman the adjudicating authority. *Kihoto Hollohan* (1992) upheld the Schedule's constitutionality while subjecting the Speaker's orders to limited judicial review, and *Keisham Meghachandra Singh* (2020) confined that review to grounds like mala fide intent, perversity, or violation of constitutional mandate — never the underlying merits.

KEY FACTS

- Case: *P.V. Selvakumar v. Speaker, TN Legislative Assembly & Ors.*, SLP(C) 34136/2026.
- 13 May 2026 floor test: the state government secured a majority with allied support; 21 AIADMK MLAs voted against their party's whip.
- 4 MLAs resigned (accepted by the Speaker); the remaining 21 were “condoned” by the party within the Tenth Schedule's 15-day window.
- The Madras High Court had already dismissed the same PIL for want of standing and for being filed after the condonation window closed.
- Supreme Court: the petitioner was not a House member, so the grievance belonged to the party or its authorised representative, not an outside petitioner.
- The Court indicated it might have intervened had the party itself disputed the Speaker's decision — leaving that route open.
- Para 2(1)(b)'s 15-day condonation proviso applies to whip-violation defections; Para 2(1)(a) (voluntarily giving up membership) carries no such proviso.
- The Dinesh Goswami Committee and the 170th Law Commission Report had both recommended an independent tribunal, not the Speaker, decide defection questions — still unimplemented.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Effectively restricts locus standi in anti-defection litigation to intra-party actors, insulating a Speaker's condonation decision from outside public-interest challenge.
- Critics warn this lets parties retroactively “forgive” whip violations, risking a hollowing-out of the Tenth Schedule's anti-defection purpose.
- Leaves open a genuine doctrinal question: can a party condone Para 2(1)(a) voluntary-exit conduct the way it can condone a Para 2(1)(b) whip violation?
- Echoes the recurring debate on the Speaker's dual role as a political office-holder and a quasi-judicial adjudicator of defection disputes.
- Way forward: the long-pending Dinesh Goswami/170th Law Commission proposal for an independent tribunal to decide defection questions, insulated from a Speaker's own political incentives.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“15 days to forgive, only the family can object” — condonation under Para 2(1)(b) must happen within 15 days, and only the party or its authorised representative, not an outside PIL, can contest how it was done.

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic match with recurring conceptual questions on Tenth Schedule disqualification grounds; no identical recent-year PYQ verified.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution:

1. It was inserted by the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985.
2. A member who votes contrary to a party whip is automatically disqualified, with no scope for condonation.
3. The Speaker's decision on disqualification is final and not subject to any judicial review.

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: (a). Statement 2 is false — Para 2(1)(b) carries an explicit 15-day condonation proviso; Statement 3 is false — *Kihoto Hollohan* subjected the Speaker's order to limited judicial review, it did not make it final.

GS2/GS3

Article 19(1)(a)/(g) • Anuradha Bhasin Doctrine • Telecommunications Act 2023

9–10 October 2026 · Source: Delhi Police order (reported by national dailies); Internet Freedom Foundation statement

Bhasin's Three P's Tested Again: A 24-Hour Delhi Internet Shutdown and the Unpublished-Order Problem

Why in News: From 10 pm on 9 October to 10 pm on 10 October 2026, Delhi Police, with Ministry of Home Affairs approval, suspended mobile internet within a 4-km radius of the Janpath–Kartavya Path crossing in New Delhi ahead of a political rally at Jantar Mantar. The Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) said the underlying suspension order was never published online, calling this “contrary to the law declared in *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India* (2020).” All major carriers (Airtel, Vodafone Idea, Jio, MTNL) were directed to comply within the designated radius.

Background: Internet suspensions were earlier ordered under the Indian Telegraph Act's Section 5(2) and the 2017 Suspension Rules; they now run under the Telecommunications Act, 2023 and the Telecommunications Services (Temporary Suspension) Rules, 2024. In *Anuradha Bhasin* (January 2020, on the Jammu & Kashmir shutdown), the Supreme Court held that an indefinite suspension is unconstitutional, that freedom of speech/expression and trade exercised through the internet are protected under Article 19(1)(a)/(g), and that every suspension order must satisfy necessity and proportionality, be time-bound, and be published and periodically reviewed. India has since repeatedly topped global internet-shutdown-frequency trackers maintained by digital-rights groups.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Shutdown: 24 hours, 9–10 October 2026, within a 4-km radius of the Janpath–Kartavya Path crossing, New Delhi.
- Ordering authority: Delhi Police (DCP, Special Cell), with Ministry of Home Affairs approval.
- Legal basis invoked: Telecommunications Act, 2023 and the Telecommunications Services (Temporary Suspension) Rules, 2024.

- 2024 Rules require a written, reasoned order; a defined area; a duration capped at 15 days; referral to a Review Committee within 24 hours; and a Committee meeting within 5 working days.
- Carriers directed to comply: Airtel, Vodafone Idea, Reliance Jio and MTNL.
- Trigger: a political rally at Jantar Mantar seeking the Chief Election Commissioner's resignation over the Special Intensive Revision exercise.
- IFF alleges the order was never published online — a pattern it says it has flagged repeatedly in its own internet-shutdown tracker.
- *Anuradha Bhasin* (2020) remains the controlling precedent on the publication-plus-proportionality standard for any suspension order.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Treats internet access as instrumental to Article 19(1)(a)/(g) rights, reframing a shutdown as a fundamental-rights question rather than mere law-and-order discretion.
- Criticism: repeated non-publication of orders defeats the very review mechanism the 2024 Rules were designed to create.
- Implementation gap: Review Committees are executive-constituted and rarely publish reasoned rejections, leaving no independent or judicial layer built into the process.
- Federal/comparative angle: telecom is a Union subject, yet shutdowns are typically triggered by state/UT police assessments of “public order” — a recurring Centre-state/executive-accountability friction point.
- Way forward: a real-time public dashboard of suspension orders (as some High Courts have already directed) and mandatory judicial scrutiny that goes beyond an executive review committee.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“Bhasin's Rule — no shutdown without the 3 P's”: Published, Proportionate, Periodically reviewed.

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic link to Article 19 reasonable-restriction debates; no identical year-matched PYQ verified.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements about internet shutdowns in India:

1. The Supreme Court in *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India* (2020) held that there exists a standalone fundamental right to the internet under Article 19.
 2. The Telecommunications Services (Temporary Suspension) Rules, 2024 require every suspension order to be referred to a Review Committee within 24 hours.
 3. A single suspension order under the 2024 Rules can remain in force for a maximum of 15 days.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b). Statement 1 is the trap — Anuradha Bhasin did not recognise an independent “right to the internet”; it held that speech/expression and trade exercised through the internet are protected under Article 19(1)(a)/(g), a frequently blurred distinction.

GS2

Statutory & Regulatory Bodies • Parliamentary Committee System • Examination Governance

9 October 2026 (presented) · Source: Rajya Sabha Department-related Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports (382nd Report)

39 Sanctioned, 23 Filled, Zero Permanent: Parliament's Standing Committee Demands a Statutory NTA

Why in News: On 9 October 2026, the Rajya Sabha's Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports presented its 382nd Report, “Reforms and Strengthening of the National Testing Agency,” following the cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 (held 3 May, cancelled 12 May 2026 over an alleged paper leak affecting roughly 22 lakh candidates, now under CBI investigation). The Committee found only 23 of 39 sanctioned NTA posts filled — a 41% vacancy rate, with every filled post held on deputation — and recommended a statutory, Parliament-answerable accountability framework for the agency.

Background: The NTA was set up in 2017 as an autonomous Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 — not a statutory body — to conduct JEE (Main), NEET-UG, UGC-NET and CUET for roughly 1.2 crore candidates annually, functions earlier held by the CBSE. An earlier leak episode in 2024 had already prompted a government-appointed committee (constituted June 2024, 101 recommendations, reported October 2024) that asked for a permanent, non-deputation NTA cadre — a recommendation this new report finds still unimplemented two years on.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- 382nd Report, Rajya Sabha Standing Committee on Education (Department of Higher Education); adopted 25 August 2026, presented 9 October 2026.
- NEET-UG 2026: held 3 May, cancelled 12 May; roughly 22 lakh candidates affected; matter under CBI investigation, leak suspected to originate at a printing press.
- Staffing: only 23 of 39 sanctioned posts filled (41% vacancy), all officers on deputation — no permanent cadre.
- Key recommendation: statutory/legislative accountability of the NTA to Parliament, replacing its current Society-registration status.
- Recommends digitally assembled question papers close to exam time with vetters held in quarantine, feasible because computer-based testing needs no printing or physical transport.
- Recommends question-setters and translators drawn from IITs/AIIMS/IIMs with conflict-of-interest screening, excluding coaching-centre owners or relatives of candidates.
- Recommends a shift to Computer-Based Testing via secure government-owned centres, plus a two-stage NEET-UG structure separating nursing/AYUSH aspirants.

- Existing safeguards — biometrics, signal jammers, AI-based CCTV — are explicitly flagged by the Committee as insufficient on their own.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Tests the “arm's-length Society” model of examination bodies against a Parliament-answerable statutory regulator — a live institutional-design debate.
- Criticism: Standing Committee recommendations are non-binding, so the Ministry may accept, partly accept, or reject them, leaving the accountability gap open until actually legislated.
- Implementation challenge: a 41% vacancy rate in a security-sensitive function shows a capacity deficit beneath repeated technological reform announcements.
- Comparative angle: contrasts NTA's Society-registration status with the UPSC's own constitutional insulation under Articles 315–323 — a template the Committee implicitly invokes.
- Way forward: a dedicated NTA Act creating a statutory regulator, a security-cleared permanent cadre, and near-exam-time digital paper assembly.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“39 sanctioned, 23 filled, 0 permanent” — the staffing gap behind why biometrics, jammers and AI-CCTV still could not stop the 2026 leak.

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic link to Mains questions on statutory/regulatory/quasi-judicial bodies and constitutional-body independence; no identical year-matched PYQ verified.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements about the National Testing Agency (NTA):

1. It was established as a statutory body under an Act of Parliament.
2. It conducts entrance examinations such as JEE (Main), NEET-UG, UGC-NET and CUET.
3. The 382nd Report of the Rajya Sabha Standing Committee on Education recommended a legislative accountability framework for the NTA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b). Statement 1 is false — the NTA is a Society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, not a statutory body, a fact candidates often confuse given the many “statutory body” distractors common in Prelims.

International Relations

2 cards — both live neighbourhood/connectivity disputes with direct Mains linkage.

GS2

India and Its Neighbourhood • Boundary & Territorial Disputes

True date 6 June 2026 (Jaishankar–Khanal meeting); dispute remains unresolved as of 13 October 2026 · Source: Ministry of External Affairs readouts via national media

Kalapani–Lipulekh–Limpiyadhura: An Undefined River Source Still Drives India–Nepal's Oldest Boundary Dispute

Why in News: In June 2026, India's External Affairs Minister met Nepal's new Foreign Minister in New Delhi — the first visit by a Nepali Foreign Minister since Nepal's new government took office in March 2026. Official readouts avoided the word “boundary,” but both sides confirmed a joint technical field team has made progress and committed to resume formal talks through the existing bilateral boundary mechanism. The issue remains live because India and China have separately agreed to reopen the Lipulekh Pass for border trade and the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage — which Nepal has protested as a violation of its own sovereignty claim over the pass.

Background: The dispute concerns Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura — territory at the India–Nepal–China tri-junction — and turns on the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli, which fixed the Kali river as Nepal's western limit but never specified the river's source. Nepal argues the river originates at Limpiyadhura, placing all three areas inside Nepal; India's administrative control places them in Uttarakhand. Flashpoints include India's November 2019 political map showing Kalapani as Indian territory, India's May 2020 opening of an all-weather road through Lipulekh Pass, and Nepal's responding constitutional amendment and new official map in June 2020 claiming all three areas, which India rejected as an artificial enlargement of claims.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Treaty basis: the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli fixes the Kali river as the western boundary but never defines the river's source.
- Disputed area: Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura, together covering roughly 372 sq km by Nepal's own claim.
- November 2019: India's revised political map places Kalapani within Uttarakhand.
- May 2020: India opens an all-weather road (roughly 80 km) to Lipulekh Pass from Dharchula.
- June 2020: Nepal's Parliament amends its Constitution, inserting a new map claiming all three disputed areas.
- 2026: India and China agree to reopen Lipulekh for border trade and Kailash Mansarovar Yatra traffic; Nepal protests this as a sovereignty violation since it claims the pass.

- June 2026: the Jaishankar–Khanal meeting restarts talks via the existing “boundary and border management mechanism,” backed by a joint field-survey team.
- Nepal's current Prime Minister has not accepted India's visit invitation and earlier floated third-party mediation; India insists the dispute must be resolved strictly bilaterally.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Treaty ambiguity as a structural driver of modern boundary disputes — an “undefined river source” is a recurring feature of colonial-era boundary instruments.
- Tension between India's strategic/connectivity imperatives (the Lipulekh trade-and-pilgrimage route to China) and a neighbour's sovereignty sensitivities — a textbook Neighbourhood First dilemma.
- Bilateral-versus-mediation debate: India's consistent rejection of external mediation on neighbourhood disputes.
- Domestic political drivers in Nepal (map nationalism, coalition politics) shaping its foreign-policy posture on the boundary question.
- Utility and limits of “joint technical field teams” where technical consensus keeps outrunning political formalisation.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“Treaty silent, river's source — that's the war”: the Sugauli Treaty named the river, not its origin. Limpiyadhura is Nepal's claimed source; Lipulekh is India's road/China-trade point; Kalapani is the administratively-held middle ground.

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic — India's neighbourhood boundary disputes are a recurring GS2 theme; no exact-year PYQ specifically on Kalapani-Lipulekh verified.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the India–Nepal boundary dispute:

1. The dispute over Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura arises from an ambiguity in the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli regarding the source of the Kali river.
2. Nepal's Parliament amended its Constitution in 2020 to formally incorporate a new map claiming all three disputed territories.
3. The Lipulekh Pass is used only for India–Nepal bilateral trade and has no connection to India–China trade arrangements.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false — Lipulekh is also a historic India–China border-trade point and the route for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, which is exactly why Nepal objects to India–China arrangements over a pass it claims as its own.

True date 29 April 2026 (waiver lapse); status unresolved as of October 2026 · Source: Government statements reported via national and international media

Chabahar and the INSTC: India's Sanctions-Constrained Connectivity Gambit Reaches a Fork

Why in News: A US sanctions waiver that had shielded Chabahar port operations since 2018 was last renewed in October 2025 but lapsed around 26 April 2026 with no further renewal, despite Indian lobbying. India had already paid its full committed investment of USD 120 million by February 2026, and is reported to be weighing a transfer of its port-management stake in the Chabahar Free Zone to an Iranian entity — a step analysts say would let India resume management later if sanctions ease, but which critics call a retreat under US pressure. India's Ministry of External Affairs says discussions continue with both Tehran and Washington, meaning the issue remains open.

Background: Chabahar, on Iran's Gulf of Oman coast, is India's gateway to landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia without transiting Pakistan. It anchors the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a roughly 7,200-km multimodal network linking India, Iran, Russia and Central Asia as a faster, cheaper alternative to the Europe-via-Suez route. India signed a 10-year agreement in 2024 for its ports entity to develop and run the Shahid Beheshti Terminal. The US has granted Chabahar periodic sanctions carve-outs since 2018, recognising its humanitarian and Afghanistan-reconstruction value, before revoking all Iran-related exemptions in September 2025 and then granting one further extension that lapsed in April 2026.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- INSTC: a roughly 7,200-km multimodal corridor connecting India, Iran, Russia and Central Asia, with Chabahar as its southern/maritime node.
- India's ports entity (India Ports Global Limited) signed a 10-year contract in 2024 to develop and run Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti Terminal.
- India's committed Chabahar investment of USD 120 million was fully paid by February 2026.
- Pakistan's China-built Gwadar Port lies roughly 140 km from Chabahar — the strategic “counterweight” logic behind India's investment.
- Sanctions timeline: 2018 first waiver, all Iran exemptions revoked September 2025, one further extension to “early 2026” granted October 2025, lapsed around 26 April 2026 without renewal since.
- The Union Budget for 2026-27 allocated zero funds for Chabahar — the first such omission in nearly a decade.
- India is reported to be weighing a transfer of its stake in the Chabahar Free Zone to an Iranian entity, preserving an option to resume management later.
- An Indian Coast Guard vessel made the first-ever Indian Coast Guard port call at Chabahar in December 2025, explicitly framed as advancing India's maritime SAGAR/MAHASAGAR

doctrine.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Strategic autonomy versus alignment: how India balances a deepening US partnership against a legacy connectivity investment in Iran.
- Connectivity diplomacy as geoeconomic strategy — Chabahar-INSTC versus China's Gwadar-CPEC as rival Indian Ocean access points for landlocked Central Asia.
- Sunk-cost and signalling dilemma — withdrawing versus merely “pausing” (a stake transfer) an investment, and what each option communicates to Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan.
- Energy and trade security: Chabahar's role in India's outreach to energy-rich Central Asia while bypassing Pakistan.
- Limits of unilateral US secondary sanctions on third-country infrastructure diplomacy, and India's continuing dependence on waiver diplomacy rather than a durable exemption framework.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“\$120 million paid, zero rupees budgeted” — India finished paying its Chabahar bill the same year it stopped budgeting for the project. Pair: Chabahar (Iran, India-built, bypasses Pakistan) versus Gwadar (Pakistan, China-built, 140 km apart).

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic — Chabahar/Iran connectivity is a long-standing GS2 theme on India's extended-neighbourhood policy and Pakistan-bypass connectivity; no exact-year PYQ verified.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Chabahar Port:

1. Chabahar Port is located on Iran's Gulf of Oman coast and serves as the southern node of the International North-South Transport Corridor.
2. India's ports entity operates the Shahid Beheshti Terminal at Chabahar under a long-term agreement signed in 2024.
3. The United States has never granted any sanctions exemption for Chabahar Port given its comprehensive Iran sanctions regime.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false and designed to catch candidates who conflate Iran's general sanctions regime with Chabahar's specific treatment — the US granted Chabahar repeated carve-outs from 2018 precisely because of its humanitarian/Afghanistan-connectivity value, even though the most recent waiver lapsed in April 2026 without renewal.

Defence

1 card — the pre-approved static-fallback ladder was not needed; this is a genuinely fresh 12 October development.

GS3

Various Security Forces and Agencies and Their Mandate • Defence Logistics

12 October 2026 · Source: Indian Army / Ministry of Defence event, New Delhi

“Logistics Is Combat Power”: The Army-FCI “Bharat Rice” MoU and Civil-Military Fusion

Why in News: On 12 October 2026, the Indian Army launched “Bharat Rice” — a premium, defence-specification rice supply for troops — in New Delhi, in the presence of the Defence Minister and the Consumer Affairs Minister. The launch formalised a five-year MoU giving the Army access to Food Corporation of India (FCI) warehouses, labour and material-handling equipment during operational contingencies, with the rice itself supplied through NAFED. The Defence Minister framed the initiative around the idea that “logistics is combat power,” explicitly citing Operation Sindoor as having validated the strategic importance of supply-chain resilience in short-notice conflicts.

Background: The Army's logistics backbone has traditionally relied on dedicated military supply depots and the Army Service Corps, with limited formal integration with civilian food-distribution infrastructure. Operation Sindoor (2025) is reported to have highlighted precision logistics management as a decisive factor in operational success, prompting the Ministry of Defence to explore “dual-use” models in which civilian public-sector capacity — warehousing, cold chain, transport — is pre-positioned for rapid military use rather than duplicated from scratch. The MoU follows roughly 18 months of coordination among the Army, FCI, NAFED and the Department of Food and Public Distribution.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- MoU signatories: the Indian Army and the Food Corporation of India; rice sourced via NAFED; led institutionally by the Directorate General of Supplies and Transport.
- Duration: five years, extendable by mutual consent.

- Coordination level: formation-level, between Army supply/transport elements and FCI's regional/divisional offices.
- Destination: Army Supply Depots directly, including remote postings in Ladakh and the North East, bypassing collection from local FCI facilities.
- Product specifications: milled to defence specification, quality-checked, free of foreign matter, packaged in 10 kg and 30 kg bags for easier forward-post handling.
- Rollout: supply begins in FY 2026-27, after roughly 18 months of inter-agency coordination.
- Doctrinal link: explicitly tied by the Defence Minister to Operation Sindoor's logistics lessons.
- Officials describe the MoU as a “dual-use” model — civilian infrastructure serving military needs without duplicating capacity.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- “Logistics as combat power” as an emerging element of Indian military doctrine post-Operation Sindoor, with implications for preparedness in short-warning or two-front scenarios.
- Civil-military fusion carries both benefits (speed, reach, cost savings via existing PSU infrastructure) and risks (operational security, peacetime dependency on civilian agencies, accountability gaps during contingencies).
- Forward positioning of rations and stores in high-altitude and North-East border areas acts as a force-multiplier for sustained deployment.
- Institutionalises inter-ministerial coordination (Defence–Food & Public Distribution–Consumer Affairs) as a template for other dual-use civil-military arrangements.
- Troop welfare becomes a retention and morale lever that is explicitly linked to operational readiness rather than treated as a standalone welfare measure.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“FCI feeds the nation in peace, now feeds the front in war” — 5-year MoU, 10/30 kg bags, FY27 start: remember the triad Army (user), FCI (warehousing/logistics), NAFED (rice supply).

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic — border-preparedness and logistics is a recurring GS3 theme; no exact-year PYQ on civil-military logistics MoUs verified.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the “Bharat Rice” initiative for Indian Army troops:

1. It is implemented through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Army and the Food Corporation of India.
2. The Directorate General of Supplies and Transport has led the initiative within the Army.
3. The rice supply chain bypasses NAFED entirely, with FCI directly milling and packaging the rice for troops.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false — NAFED is the actual supply channel for the rice itself, while FCI's role is providing warehousing, labour and material-handling infrastructure; candidates who assume FCI handles the entire chain end-to-end will mark it wrongly.

THEIAS AKADEMIA Civil-military fusion and logistics doctrine are Ethics-and-Governance crossover themes our **EMP (Ethics & Moral Philosophy)** cohort examines through real case files — theiasakademia.com

Science & Technology

2 cards — space technology and semiconductor indigenisation.

GS3

Space Technology • Indigenisation • Awareness in Science & Technology

13 October 2026 (pre-launch status; launch window 15–20 October 2026) · Source: ISRO launch-campaign reporting; Lok Sabha written reply, 5 August 2026

NavIC's Fourth-Satellite Problem: Why ISRO's NVS-03 Launch Matters for Standalone Positioning

Why in News: ISRO is in the final pre-launch campaign, begun 14 September 2026, for NVS-03 — the third second-generation NavIC satellite — aboard a GSLV Mk II from Sriharikota, with a working launch window of 15–20 October 2026. The satellite has cleared all checks after incorporating corrective measures from the NVS-02 anomaly. The launch matters because NavIC's operational satellite count fell to just three after the last working atomic clock on an earlier-generation satellite failed in March 2026, pushing India's only indigenous positioning system below its functional minimum for standalone operation.

Background: NavIC (formerly IRNSS) is India's regional satellite navigation system, conceived after the 1999 Kargil conflict exposed India's dependence on the US-operated GPS for military operations. The first-generation satellites (2013–2018) suffered repeated indigenous atomic-clock failures, prompting a second generation (the NVS series) with improved clocks and an added civilian-friendly L1 signal band usable by ordinary consumer GPS chipsets. NVS-01 (2023) succeeded; NVS-02 (January 2025) failed to reach its intended orbit after a propulsion fault, delaying the whole follow-on sequence.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- NavIC currently has only 3 operational satellites; standalone, non-assisted positioning needs a minimum of 4.
- A fourth satellite lets a receiver solve for its own position and clock error simultaneously, without borrowing an external time reference.
- NVS-03 carries navigation payloads in the L1, L5 and S bands plus a C-band ranging payload; it is built on ISRO's I-2K satellite bus.
- The last working atomic clock on an earlier-generation NavIC satellite failed in March 2026, triggering the current degraded-constellation situation.
- NVS-02's January 2025 failure traced to a propulsion-subsystem (apogee-motor) defect, not a launch-vehicle failure.
- Launch vehicle: GSLV Mk II, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- NavIC's Restricted (encrypted) Service is reserved for authorised and military users; its Standard Positioning Service is the open civilian signal, covering India plus roughly 1,500 km beyond its borders.
- A full second-generation sequence of further satellites is planned to build out a 7-satellite NavIC base layer, per an August 2026 parliamentary reply.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Strategic rationale for an indigenous Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT) system independent of foreign-controlled GPS/GLONASS/Galileo, especially for missile guidance and military coordination.
- Vulnerability from single-point-of-failure components (atomic clocks) in long-life satellites, and India's push for domestic clock manufacture.
- Redundancy and constellation-design trade-offs: minimum versus optimal satellite count, and graceful degradation versus hard failure.
- Civil-military dual use of NavIC — an open L1 signal for consumer devices alongside a restricted, encrypted service — and what that implies for technology diffusion.
- Lessons from NVS-02's propulsion failure for India's quality assurance in satellite subsystems going forward.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“3 is a crowd, 4 is a fix” — NavIC needs a minimum of 4 working satellites for standalone position-plus-time; four points are needed to pin both “where” and “when.”

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic — ISRO's NavIC/IRNSS programme has been tested conceptually in Prelims before; no direct repeat found on the NVS series specifically.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. With reference to India's NavIC system, consider the following statements:

1. NavIC's Standard Positioning Service is encrypted and available only to authorised government

and military users.

2. A minimum of four operational satellites with functioning atomic clocks is required for standalone positioning.

3. NVS-series satellites added an L1 signal band to allow reception by ordinary consumer GPS-chipset devices.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b). Statement 1 reverses NavIC's two service tiers — the Standard Positioning Service is the open civilian signal; it is the Restricted Service that is encrypted and reserved for authorised users.

GS3

Indigenisation of Technology • Electronics & Semiconductor Policy

Honestly dated — SEMICON India 2026 Phase-2 launch, 17–19 September 2026; fab-node reporting, July 2026 ·

Source: PM's address at SEMICON India 2026; Union Ministry statements; industry reporting

Crawl at 90, Sprint at 28: Why India's First Mega-Fab Is Starting on a Mature Node, Not the Leading Edge

Why in News: At SEMICON India 2026 (17–19 September 2026, New Delhi), the Prime Minister launched the second phase of India's Semiconductor Mission, raising the outlay from roughly USD 8 billion to USD 13.5 billion (₹1,27,500 crore) over a 12-year mission. A global equipment maker separately pledged USD 5 billion toward an “India Vision 2035” plan. This follows earlier reporting (mid-2026) that India's first large commercial fab — a Tata-led facility at Dholera built with a Taiwanese partner — will begin production mainly on the mature 90nm node rather than the more advanced 28nm node originally flagged, pushing commercial output from end-2026 to mid-2028.

Background: A semiconductor “process node,” expressed in nanometres (e.g. 90nm, 28nm), historically denoted the minimum feature size producible on a chip: a smaller node packs more transistors per unit area, giving more computing power per chip. Nodes below roughly 40nm are generally called “leading-edge” (used in smartphones, AI chips); nodes of 40nm and above are “mature” or “trailing-edge,” still essential for automotive electronics, power-management chips and industrial/defence applications. Technology transfer in fabrication typically starts with mature nodes before graduating to advanced ones, since yield, equipment calibration and workforce skill all scale with node complexity. India's semiconductor push began with a first phase (roughly USD 8 billion, cleared 2021) that sanctioned fabs and packaging units; this second phase scales ambition toward leading-edge capability and a fuller design-to-packaging ecosystem.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- SEMICON India 2026 outlay: Phase 2 targets USD 13.5 billion (₹1,27,500 crore) against Phase 1's roughly USD 8 billion (₹76,000 crore).

- Mission duration: 12 years; Phase 1 ran for 5 years; the Union Cabinet cleared Phase 2 in July 2026.
- Five identified pillars: chip design, machines and materials, fabs, advanced packaging, and research and talent.
- A global equipment maker pledged USD 5 billion over a decade under “India Vision 2035,” including a 140-acre research park.
- Government target under Phase 2: at least 200 Indian startups/companies designing chips domestically.
- India's first large commercial fab (Dholera, Tata-led with a Taiwanese technology partner) will launch production primarily on the 90nm node — not the 28nm originally cited — with an eventual target band of 28nm to 110nm.
- Commercial production at this fab, earlier targeted for end-2026, is now expected by mid-2028.
- A separate technology agreement (reported May 2026) covers a planned 300mm-wafer fab in Gujarat.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- The strategic logic of starting semiconductor self-reliance with mature/trailing-edge nodes (90nm/55nm) rather than leading-edge (28nm and below) is risk management, not a failure of ambition.
- The “node race” framing (smaller is always better) misreads industrial strategy — mature nodes serve automotive, defence and industrial electronics where India has acute import dependence.
- Technology-transfer partnerships compress India's decades-long capability gap, but also carry a risk of foreign-technology lock-in.
- Fiscal sustainability and opportunity cost of a USD 13.5 billion, 12-year subsidy-heavy mission against competing claims on the exchequer.
- Links to Atmanirbhar Bharat/Make in India and supply-chain resilience after the global chip shortages of 2020–22 exposed India's near-total import dependence.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“Crawl at 90, sprint at 28” — India's first fab crawls on the mature 90nm node before it can sprint to the advanced 28nm one; a bigger nanometre number means older/safer/cheaper technology, not a “better” one in absolute terms.

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic — indigenisation of technology is a recurring GS3 theme; semiconductor-specific framing is a newly emerging area, not yet directly asked.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. With reference to semiconductor “process nodes,” consider the following statements:

1. A smaller process-node number (in nanometres) generally corresponds to a smaller minimum transistor feature size and higher transistor density.

2. Nodes of 40nm and above are typically called “leading-edge” nodes, used mainly in advanced AI processors.

3. India's first large commercial fab is set to begin production primarily on a mature node rather than its originally announced, more advanced node.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 2 inverts standard industry terminology — nodes of 40nm and above are “mature/trailing-edge,” not “leading-edge”; leading-edge refers to the smallest, most advanced nodes.

Economy

2 cards — statistical-architecture reform on both the national-accounts and inflation-measurement fronts.

GS3

Indian Economy • National/State Income Accounting • Statistical Measurement

9–10 October 2026 · Source: National Statistics Office (NSO) consultation draft; comments invited till 28 October 2026

Make vs Spend: MoSPI's Draft Guidelines Finally Try to Measure States From the Spending Side

Why in News: The National Statistics Office released a consultation draft on 9 October 2026 setting out, for the first time, detailed guidelines for states and Union Territories to compile Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) using the expenditure approach — measuring how final output is actually used (consumption, investment, trade) rather than only how it is produced. The base year is 2022-23, and public comments are invited until 28 October 2026. The NSO flags that while some states already estimate government and investment spending, not a single state currently compiles Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) estimates — the single largest expenditure component in any economy.

Background: India measures GDP mainly through the production/value-added approach at the national level, with limited state-level granularity. GSDP, India's state-level equivalent of GDP, has traditionally been compiled principally via the production side by State Directorates of Economics and Statistics, creating a long-standing gap in understanding how different states actually spend and invest relative to how much they produce. International best practice (the UN System of National Accounts) recommends triangulating GDP/GSDP estimates via production, income and expenditure approaches for cross-validation; India has historically struggled to

extend the expenditure approach below the national level because of fragmented state-level consumer-expenditure data.

KEY FACTS

- Draft released 9 October 2026 by the NSO; comment window closes 28 October 2026 — it is a consultation draft, not a final methodology, and issues no new GSDP numbers.
- Base year for the new expenditure-side estimates: 2022-23.
- Expenditure-side GSDP components to be compiled: Private Final Consumption Expenditure, Government Final Consumption Expenditure, Gross Fixed Capital Formation, changes in stocks/inventories, valuables, and net exports.
- Key statistical gap flagged: some states already estimate Gross Fixed Capital Formation and Government Final Consumption Expenditure, but currently no state compiles PFCE estimates.
- Methodology: use state-specific data where available; where unavailable, use “allocation indicators” to distribute national/regional totals across states — meaning such derived figures are not directly observed.
- Requires capacity-building of State Directorates of Economics and Statistics to apply common definitions, coverage and estimation procedures for cross-state comparability.
- This draft is distinct from India's separate national-accounts base-year revision exercise and from environmental/natural-capital accounting.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Robust state-level expenditure data matters for evidence-based state fiscal policy, GST revenue projections, and Finance Commission transfers.
- The statistical challenge of “allocation indicators” is that derived/estimated figures risk masking genuine inter-state variation in consumption behaviour.
- Centre-state cooperative federalism in statistics depends on State Directorate capacity, which varies widely across states.
- Comparability risk: if states interpret “common standards” differently, cross-state GSDP comparisons could still mislead policymakers.
- Fits a broader debate on India's statistical architecture following gaps in national consumption-survey data, with this draft an attempt at a partial, state-level workaround.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“Make vs Spend” — production-side GSDP asks what a state made, expenditure-side asks what it spent and invested; India has long done the former well and is only now building the latter, starting with the biggest missing piece, PFCE.

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic — national income/GDP estimation methodology has been tested in Mains before; this is a fresh state-level extension of that theme, not yet directly tested.

 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. With reference to the NSO's October 2026 draft guidelines on GSDP compilation via the expenditure approach, consider the following statements:

1. The draft provides final, revised GSDP growth figures for all states based on the new 2022-23 base year.
2. As per the draft, no state currently compiles official Private Final Consumption Expenditure estimates.
3. "Allocation indicators" are used to derive state-level expenditure estimates where direct state-specific data are unavailable.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 1 misrepresents the draft's status — it is only a consultation/methodology document and explicitly provides no new GSDP numbers or state comparisons.

GS3

Indian Economy • Inflation Measurement • Statistical Resilience

9 October 2026 • Source: RBI Working Paper No. 01/2026

Perception Fills the Pandemic Gap: An RBI Working Paper Reconstructs India's Missing State-Level Inflation Data

Why in News: The Reserve Bank of India released Working Paper No. 01/2026 on 9 October 2026, addressing a long-standing data gap: official state-wise CPI-Urban inflation figures are missing for April and May of both 2020 and 2021, because COVID-19 disrupted field-level price collection so severely that only an all-India (not state-wise) imputed index could be published for those months. The paper uses the RBI's own Inflation Expectations Survey of Households — which continued uninterrupted through the pandemic — to statistically reconstruct plausible state-wise inflation estimates for these four “blank” months.

Background: Consumer Price Index compilation depends on continuous physical price collection across designated rural and urban centres, with India's CPI-Urban series broken down by state/UT for policy use such as regional inflation differentials and welfare indexation. The nationwide lockdown of April–May 2020 made this physical collection impossible in many centres, forcing statisticians to impute only a single all-India figure rather than full state-wise breakdowns — leaving a genuine two-year hole in India's state inflation time series that researchers have had to work around using methods like linear interpolation, which this paper argues produces much larger errors than its survey-based approach.

KEY FACTS

- Working Paper No. 01/2026, released 9 October 2026, authored within the RBI's research department.

- Four months of missing official state-wise CPI-Urban data: April 2020, May 2020, April 2021 and May 2021, though all-India imputed figures did exist for these months.
- Methodology: combines centre-wise urban consumers' current inflation perceptions, three-months-ahead inflation expectations, and past realised state CPI-U inflation from the RBI's bimonthly household survey.
- Survey coverage used: 18 urban centres representing 17 states/UTs, accounting for 86.8% of India's urban CPI weight.
- Aggregated survey-based estimates differ from official all-India urban inflation by only about 13–22 basis points across the four affected months — a notably tight margin.
- The paper explicitly contrasts this with simple linear interpolation, which it says produces much larger aggregate errors.
- Authors caveat the output as a plausible reconstruction for research, not a replacement for the missing official observations — household inflation perceptions may not perfectly track the formal CPI basket.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Exposes the informational fragility that COVID-19 revealed in India's statistical system, and makes the case for survey-based “nowcasting” tools as a complement to, not a substitute for, administrative data collection.
- Shows how monetary-policy transmission and state-specific welfare indexation were affected by a two-year state-inflation blind spot.
- Raises a genuine methodological debate: survey-based reconstruction versus statistical interpolation versus leaving a genuine, honestly-flagged data gap.
- Highlights RBI's own primary data infrastructure as a crisis-resilient complement to the field-survey-dependent machinery used for official CPI.
- Offers a broader lesson for statistical-resilience planning — building redundant, survey-based data channels for crises that disrupt physical data collection.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“Perception fills the pandemic gap” — when lockdowns blanked out physical price collection for four months across 2020–21, the RBI used what households said about inflation to estimate what inflation actually was.

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic — CPI/WPI mechanics and base-year/method issues have been tested before; this specific Covid-era state-data-gap reconstruction is a novel theme.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. With reference to RBI Working Paper No. 01/2026 on state-level inflation data gaps during the Covid period, consider the following statements:

1. Official state-wise CPI-Urban inflation figures are entirely missing — even at the all-India level — for April and May 2020.

2. The paper uses the RBI's Inflation Expectations Survey of Households to reconstruct the missing state-wise estimates.
3. The survey-based reconstruction's estimates were found to deviate from official all-India urban inflation by only about 13–22 basis points.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 1 overstates the gap — an all-India imputed figure did exist for April–May 2020; it is only the state-wise breakdown that is missing.

THEIAS AKADEMIA

Statistical-architecture questions like today's GSDP and inflation-data stories are exactly where our **LAKSHYAM AIR1** economy module builds genuine first-principles fluency, not rote memorisation — theiasakademia.com

★ THEIAS AKADEMIA — PROOF OF PRECISION

UPSC CSE Prelims 2026 Results

In what critics called the most unpredictable Prelims paper in a decade —

48

QUESTIONS FROM
ANTIM ASSURED 100+

7

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE DOCUMENT

6

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE CLASS

Our students had seen 48 questions before the paper was opened.

This is not luck. This is TheIAS Akademia.

JOIN ANTIM ASSURED 100+ →

The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning.

ANTIM ASSURED 100+ · TheIAS Akademia · theiasakademia.com · theiasakademia@gmail.com