



# WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

**OCTOBER, 2024**

**Week-3**

**15-21 Oct., 2024**

★★ Useful for ★★

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams,  
SSC and Banking Exams**

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## East Asia Summit

- **Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently addressed the 19th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

### Key Highlights

- The PM emphasized that a free, open, inclusive, prosperous and rule-based Indo-Pacific is important for the peace and progress of the entire region.
- India stressed that maritime activities should be conducted under the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) to ensure freedom of navigation and air space. Also, a strong and effective Code of Conduct should be created.

### About East Asia Summit (EAS)

- The origins of East Asia Summit dates back to the 1990 proposal for an East Asian Economic Grouping (EAEG).
- The project was later revived through the ASEAN Plus Three or APT (China, Japan, and South Korea) Summit of Heads of State and Government that first met in Kuala Lumpur in December 1997. It eventually found expression through the creation of the EAS in 2005, with 16 members. The United States and Russia joined in 2011.
- **Members:** There are 18 members;
  - The 10 ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) members: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
  - 8 non-ASEAN members: Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea, and the United States.

## India-Canada Diplomatic Row

- **Context:** India decided to withdraw its High Commissioner and other affected diplomats and officials from Canada.

### Key Highlights

- In September 2023, Canadian PM Trudeau alleged Indian involvement in the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, which India rejected.
- India advised its nationals in Canada and suspended visa services for Canadians.
- Visa Resumption: Services resumed in specific categories in October and e-visas for certain categories in November 2023.
- The Ministry of External Affairs said the “unsubstantiated allegations” sought to shift focus away from “Khalistani terrorists and extremists who have been provided shelter in Canada”.
- Concerns were raised about the safety of Indian diplomats, stating that the Trudeau Government’s actions contribute to an atmosphere of extremism and violence

### India-Canada Bilateral Relations

- India-Canada relations are based on shared values of democracy, cultural diversity, economic engagement, and people-to-people connections.
- In 2015, PM Modi visited Canada, leading to multiple agreements.
  - In 2018, Trudeau visited India, signing six agreements in various sectors.
  - COVID-19 Cooperation: Leaders discussed vaccine collaboration and evacuation of stranded citizens.
  - G-7 Meeting (2022): The two PMs met to enhance bilateral relations.
  - G20 Summit (2023): Trudeau attended the summit in India and met Modi.
- Established dialogues in trade, energy, and foreign affairs, with recent consultations in 2023.
- Counter-terrorism efforts under a Joint Working Group established in 1997.
- An agreement signed in 2010 for peaceful nuclear energy uses, with implementation oversight by a Joint Committee.
- Expanded Ministerial level Energy Dialogue since 2018 to include renewables.

- MoUs signed for satellite tracking and astronomy; ISRO has launched Canadian satellites.
- Total bilateral trade in 2023 reached USD 9.36 billion, with significant service trade.
  - Canadian investments in India exceed CAD 75 billion, with over 600 Canadian companies operating in India.
  - Exports: Pharmaceuticals, electronic goods, jewelry, seafood, engineering goods.
  - Imports: Minerals, pulses, potash, and chemicals.
- Multiple MoUs signed for research and technological collaboration.
- Largest foreign student demographic in Canada is Indian, with around 427,000 students.
- People-to-People Relations: Canada has a significant Indian diaspora (approximately 1.8 million), contributing to its economy and society.

## National Water Awards

- **Context:** The Hon'ble Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C.R. Paatil, announced the winners of the 5th National Water Awards.

### Key Facts

- A total of 38 winners were announced across 9 categories:
  - Best State: Odisha (1st), Uttar Pradesh (2nd), Gujarat and Puducherry (joint 3rd).

### About National Water Awards

- The National Water Awards were first launched in 2018, with subsequent awards given in 2019, 2020, and 2022. No awards were given in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- For 2023, the awards were launched on the Rashtriya Puraskar Portal, receiving 686 applications, which were evaluated by a Jury Committee and verified through ground truthing by the Central Water Commission and Central Ground Water Board.
- The awards aim to recognize efforts in water management and conservation, promoting public awareness of the importance of water usage

practices. The initiative supports the government's vision of a 'Jal Samridh Bharat' (Water Prosperous India).

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### SCO Summit, 2024

- **Context:** The Heads of Government Meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) were attended by India, Pakistan, China, Russia and six other member countries. It was held in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 15-16 October.

### Key Highlights

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar travelled to Islamabad for the meeting, the first such visit in nine years.
- Due to territorial sovereignty issues, India remains the only SCO member to oppose China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
  - The SCO's joint communique reaffirmed support for China's BRI.
- The summit saw criticism of Western sanctions on Russia and Iran, which were deemed harmful to international trade and economic relations.
- Discussions between India and Pakistan indicated a potential resumption of cricket ties, though these are still early.
- In a reference to Pakistan, the External Affairs Minister said, "If activities across borders are characterised by terrorism, extremism and separatism, they are hardly likely to encourage trade, energy flows, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges in parallel."

### About Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- Shanghai Five emerged in 1996 from a series of border demarcation and demilitarization talks between 4 former USSR republics and China.
  - Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan were members of the Shanghai Five.
  - With the accession of Uzbekistan to the group in 2001, the Shanghai Five was renamed the SCO.

- Objective: To enhance regional cooperation for efforts to curb terrorism, separatism, and extremism in the Central Asian region.
- Members: China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Belarus and the four Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan.
- Observer status: Afghanistan and Mongolia.
- Language: The SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.
- Structure: The supreme decision-making body of the SCO is the Council of Heads of States (CHS) which meets once a year.
  - The Organization has 2 standing bodies — the Secretariat in Beijing and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent.

## World Telecommunication

### Standardization Assembly (WTSA)

- **Context:** The Prime Minister inaugurated the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) 2024 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. He also inaugurated the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of India Mobile Congress 2024 during the programme.

### Key Highlights

- The symposium aims to explore and understand local and global developments, cutting-edge research, key architectural principles, and emerging technologies that will shape the 6G landscape.
- The event is organized by the Bharat 6G Alliance, and marks a milestone in India's journey towards global leadership in 6G technology.

### About Bharat 6G Alliance

- The Bharat 6G Alliance is a collaborative initiative of Indian industry, academia, national research institutions and standards organizations.
- It brings together various stakeholders to foster innovation, and to contribute to global 6G standards through bodies like the ITU and 3GPP (Third Generation Partnership Project).

### About WTSA

- It is the governing conference for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), held every four years.
- This is the first time the assembly will be hosted in India and the Asia-Pacific region.
- The event attracted over 3,000 leaders, policymakers, and tech experts from more than 190 countries, focusing on telecom, digital, and ICT sectors.
- Discussions covered the future of standards for critical technologies such as 6G, AI, IoT, Big Data, and cybersecurity.
- Hosting WTSA 2024 positions India to influence the global telecom agenda and future technology standards.
- Indian startups and research institutions are expected to gain valuable insights into Intellectual Property Rights and Standard Essential Patents.

## INS Samarthak

- **Context:** The Indian Navy celebrated a significant milestone with the launch of Samarthak.

### About INS Samarthak

- It is designed for various roles, including towing, launching and recovering targets, operating unmanned vehicles, and testing indigenous weapons.
- It is the first vessel under the Multi-Purpose Vessel (MPV) project at L&T Shipyard in Kattupalli.
- The launch, aligned with the government's Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiatives. This launch underscores the Indian Navy's commitment to enhancing indigenous shipbuilding capabilities and self-reliance in maritime defense.

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## Minimum Support Price

- **Context:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by the Prime Minister, has approved the increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for all mandated Rabi Crops for Marketing Season 2025-26.

## About MSP

- It is a form of market intervention by the Government to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices.
- The prices are announced by the Government at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
- The major objectives are to support the farmers from distress sales and to procure food grains for public distribution.

## Crops covered under MSP

- Kharif Crops (total 14) like paddy, jowar, bajra, maize, ragi, tur/arhar, moong, urad, groundnut, soyabean, sunflower, sesamum, niger seed, cotton;
- Rabi Crops (total 06) like wheat, barley, gram, masur/lentil, rapeseed and mustard, and safflower;
- Commercial Crops (total 02) like jute and copra.
- MSP for Toria and de-husked coconut is also fixed on the basis of MSPs of rapeseed & mustard and copra respectively.

## Europa Clipper

- **Context:** NASA has launched the Europa Clipper, to investigate Jupiter and its moon, Europa.

## About Europa Clipper

- The Europa Clipper is the largest spacecraft Nasa has built for planetary exploration.
- It will take five- and-a-half years to reach its destination, and Clipper will approach Europa at a distance of just 25 km from its surface.
- **Structure:**
  - The spacecraft has massive solar panels to generate sufficient power required for the long distance between Jupiter and the Sun.
  - The main body of the spacecraft has nine scientific instruments including radar to penetrate Europa's icy shell, cameras to map its surface, and devices to analyze its atmosphere and composition.

## About Europa

- Europa was discovered by Galileo Galilei in 1610, alongside three other moons (Io, Ganymede, and Callisto), collectively known as the Galilean moons.
- Europa is covered by an ice sheet estimated to be 15 to 24 km thick.
- Beneath this ice sheet, scientists believe there could be a subsurface ocean, possibly up to 120 km deep. It is making Europa a prime candidate for the search for extraterrestrial life within our solar system.

## Sanjiv Khanna

- **Context:** Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud has recommended Justice Sanjiv Khanna to the government for appointment as the 51st Chief Justice of India.

## About Chief Justice of India

- The Chief Justice of India and the other judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President under clause (2) of Article 124 of the Indian Constitution.
- The Chief Justice should be the senior most judge of the Supreme Court deemed fit for the role.
- The outgoing Chief Justice recommends the next Chief Justice to the Union Minister of Law, who forwards it to the Prime Minister for the President's approval. If there are doubts about the senior most judge's fitness, consultations with other judges (per Article 124(2)) will occur.

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## Section 6A of Citizenship Act

- **Context:** In a 4 : 1 majority verdict, the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955.

## Key Facts

- Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955, confers citizenship to immigrants who entered Assam after



January 1, 1966 but before March 24, 1971. The provision was inserted into the Act in furtherance of a Memorandum of Settlement called the “Assam Accord”.

- Under Section 6A, foreigners who had entered Assam before January 1, 1966, and been “ordinarily resident” in the State, would have all the rights and obligations of Indian citizens.
- The cut-off date provides a different standard for citizenship for immigrants entering Assam than the rest of India (which is July 1948) and violates the right to equality (Article 14) of the Constitution.
- Also, the provision violates the rights of indigenous people from Assam under Article 29 by changing the demographics in the state.

### Supreme Court Ruling

- The Court opined that the mere presence of diverse ethnic groups within a state does not, in itself, constitute a violation of Article 29(1) of the Constitution (protection of interests of minorities).
- Section 6A is a statutory intervention that balances the humanitarian needs of migrants of Indian origin and the impact of such migration on economic and cultural needs of Indian states
- The judgment underlined parliamentary supremacy over citizenship matters under Article 11 of the Constitution.
- It also reinforced the Union government’s defense of amendments under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019, which is presently pending challenge in the Supreme court.

### Five Eye Alliance

- **Context:** The Five Eye Alliance has backed Canada, urging India to cooperate with the Canadian legal process.

### About Five Eye Alliance

- It is a multilateral intelligence-sharing network shared by over 20 different agencies of five English-speaking countries — Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

- Formed in the aftermath of World War II, the alliance was rooted in the UK-USA Agreement of 1946.
- The alliance is known for its comprehensive global surveillance capabilities, through various methods such as intercepting data from satellites, telephone networks, and fibre optic cables.

### Samarth Scheme

- **Context:** The Union government extended the Samarth Scheme for two years (FY 2024-25 and 2025-26) with a budget of Rs. 495 Crore to train 3 lakh persons in textile-related skills.

### About Samarth Scheme

- Samarth is a demand-driven and placement-oriented umbrella skilling program of the Ministry of Textiles.
- Scheme aims to encourage and support the industry in creating jobs in the organized textile and related sectors, covering the entire value chain of textiles, excluding Spinning and Weaving.
- The scheme also provides upskilling/reskilling programs to improve the productivity of existing workers in Apparel & Garmenting segments.
- Under the Scheme, 3.27 lakh (in which 88.3% is women) candidates have trained, of which 2.6 lakh (79.5%) have been employed.

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### Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2024

- **Context:** The 2024 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, is published with the theme of Poverty Amid Conflict.

### Key Findings

- Across 112 countries and 6.3 billion people, 1.1 billion people (18.3 percent) live in acute multidimensional poverty.
- Poor people live in rural areas: 962 million (83.7 percent) live in rural areas.

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- Around 70.7 percent of all poor people live in rural areas of Sub-Saharan Africa (463 million) and South Asia (350 million).
- The five countries with the largest number of people living in poverty are India (234 million), Pakistan (93 million), Ethiopia (86 million), Nigeria (74 million) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (66 million).
  - Together, these five countries account for nearly half (48.1 percent) of the 1.1 billion poor people.
- Approximately 584 million people under 18 are living in extreme poverty, making up 27.9% of all children globally, compared to 13.5% of adults.
- Poverty in conflicted regions: The report noted that 2023 witnessed more conflicts than at any time since World War II causing displacement of over 117 million people.
- Nearly 40% of the 1.1 billion people live in poverty, approximately 455 million, are situated in countries experiencing conflict.

### About Global Multidimensional Poverty Index

- Global Multidimensional Poverty Index is published annually by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative.
- The index utilizes 10 indicators across these three dimensions.
- If a household is deprived in one-third or more of these indicators, it is considered multidimensionally poor.

### IDEAS

- **Context:** India has extended a Line of Credit of 487.60 crores to Mauritius for a water pipeline replacement project.

### Key Facts

- It is the first ₹-denominated credit under the Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS).
- It aims to replace approximately 100 km of obsolete water pipeline in Mauritius and will be financed by the State Bank of India on concessional terms.
- This initiative reflects India's commitment to socio-economic development in Global South countries, aligning with the needs of its partner nations.

## International Abhidhamma Divas

- **Context:** PM Narendra Modi addressed the ceremony in celebration of International Abhidhamma Divas and recognition of Pali as a classical language in New Delhi.

### Key facts

- Abhidhamma Divas is celebrated to commemorate the descent of Lord Buddha from the celestial realm of T vati sa-devaloka after teaching the Abhidhamma to the deities, including his late mother.
- Abhidhamma adopts a specialized and analytical approach to explore reality.
- It offers a detailed framework for understanding the nature of existence, addressing the processes of birth, death, and mental phenomena in a precise and abstract manner.
- The Abhidhamma categorizes reality into four ultimate realities: Citta (consciousness), Cetasika (mental factors), Rupa (material phenomena) and Nibbana (the unconditioned state, or ultimate liberation).

### Classical Status to Pali language

- Pali language served as the medium for delivering Lord Buddha's teachings around 500 B.C.
- The Tipitaka, or "Threefold Basket," which includes the Vinaya Pitaka (monastic discipline), Sutta Pitaka (Buddha's discourses), and Abhidhamma Pitaka (philosophical analysis), is entirely written in Pali. These texts are the foundation of Theravada Buddhist philosophy and practice.
- Pali literature encompasses the Jataka Kathas, which recount the stories of the Buddha's previous lives.

## Lady Justice

- **Context:** The Supreme Court of India has introduced a new statue of "Lady Justice" in its judges' library to reflect a modern interpretation of justice.

### About Statue of Lady Justice

- The statue of "Lady Justice" was designed by Vinod Goswami, a muralist and educator from Delhi.

- The statue depicts a saree-clad woman without a blindfold.
  - She holds scales in one hand and a copy of the Constitution of India in the other, replacing the traditional sword.
- Symbolism: The absence of a blindfold signifies that “Law is not blind; it sees everyone equally,” according to Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud.
  - This new representation aims to convey the importance of impartiality and equality in justice.
  - The statue reflects ongoing legal reforms and the goal of “decolonising” India’s legal framework.
- For the first three years, excise duty on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) purchased at RCS airports capped at 2%.
- States have committed to reducing VAT on ATF to 1% or less for ten years and providing essential services such as security, fire services, and utility services at reduced rates.

## eShram-One Stop Solution

- **Context:** The Union Minister of Labor & Employment and Youth Affairs & Sports launched the ‘eShram-One Stop Solution’.

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## Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN)

- **Context:** The UDAN scheme has completed 8 years of Implementation.

### Key Highlights

- The Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) – UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) is a component of India’s National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016, launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) in 2016, with a 10-year vision.
- It aims to improve infrastructure and connectivity in India, especially in remote and underserved regions.
- The first UDAN flight took off in 2017, connecting Shimla to New Delhi.

### Features of the UDAN Scheme

- Airlines assess demand on specific routes and submit proposals during bidding rounds. The scheme incentivizes airlines to connect underserved regions by offering them support through Viability Gap Funding (VGF) and various concessions.
- **Support Mechanisms:**
  - Airport Operators waive landing and parking charges for RCS flights, and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) does not levy Terminal Navigation Landing Charges (TNLC) on these flights.

### Key Highlights

- It will act as a mediator to ensure that unorganized workers have easy access to a variety of Government schemes/programs.
- It will help unorganized workers become aware of the schemes designed for them.
- It will facilitate in identification and implementation of the Social Security & Welfare Schemes for the unorganised worker and to help saturation of the schemes in the fast and effective manner.
- Consequently, 12 schemes of different Central Ministries / Departments have already been integrated/ mapped with the eShram.

## European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI)

- **Context:** Switzerland has officially joined the European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI)

### About European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI)

- It is a collaborative project aimed at building a unified air and missile defense system across Europe.
- The initiative was introduced by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in August 2022, following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.
- The initiative facilitates better coordination among European nations regarding air defense and creates opportunities for shared resources and expertise. It will strengthen NATO’s integrated air and missile defence.