The Month in

October 2026

Sixteen stories from October, each told in full: what happened, the syllabus concept behind it, and the facts worth carrying into the examination hall.

October 2026 began with a language and ended with a ledger. Pali and Prakrit, which have no native speakers, gained university homes, while the history pages recalled a London hostel for exiles and a festival of wooden chariots. Abroad, India pressed for finance to follow promises and for cross-border terrorism to be named. At home the state rewired its machinery, from GST enforcement to Farmer IDs, a planning map and a gig-worker board. Each decision tested whether capacity matches announcement.

THE MONTH AT A GLANCE

3 Oct	Five Centres of Excellence approved for classical languages
8 Oct	GST Council recommends removing arrest provisions
12 Oct	PM GatiShakti marks five years of shared mapping
13 Oct	First BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting adopts Delhi Declaration
15 Oct	Sukhna and Sauj take Ramsar tally to 103
22 Oct	India and Poland aim to double trade by 2030
23 Oct	Kittur's Rani Chennamma honoured in Parliament
24 Oct	Eleven crore Farmer IDs created, five months early
28 Oct	Cabinet approves ₹7,396 crore scheme for Panchayats
30 Oct	Board notified for gig and platform workers' welfare

I HISTORY & CULTURE

01 3 OCT 2026

Five New Centres for Classical Languages, Pali Among Them

The Education Ministry approved Centres of Excellence for five classical languages, including Pali and Prakrit, which have no native speakers.

Pali has no native speakers. Neither does Prakrit. Yet on **3 October 2026** the Department of Higher Education approved **five Centres of Excellence** for Classical Assamese, Bengali, Marathi, Pali and Prakrit, at Tezpur University, Visva-Bharati, Deccan College in Pune, the Central University of Odisha and the Central University of Gujarat respectively.

The last two placements carry the logic. Pali is the language of the Tipitaka, the Theravada canon, and Odisha holds Dhauli, where Ashoka recorded his remorse after the Kalinga war. Prakrit, a family of Middle Indo-Aryan vernaculars, is the language of the Jain Agamas, and Gujarat has a deep Jain scholarly tradition. The Centres will pursue research and the **preservation and digitisation** of texts, since a language without speakers survives only through trained readers.

Behind it lies a change of definition. In 2024 India raised the antiquity bar to **1,500 to 2,000 years**, but allowed a classical language to be **discontinuous** with its later forms. That clause admitted Pali and Prakrit, taking the total to eleven.

CONCEPT: CLASSICAL, NOT SCHEDULED

Classical status comes from the Ministry of Culture, after a Linguistic Experts Committee under the Sahitya Akademi examines a claim. Its benefits are academic: awards, chairs and Centres of Excellence. The Eighth Schedule is a separate list of 22 languages for official use; Pali and Prakrit are classical but not in it.

REMEMBER

- Tamil 2004, Sanskrit 2005, Telugu and Kannada 2008, Malayalam 2013, Odia 2014.
- Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese and Bengali recognised in October 2024.
- Pali: Theravada Tipitaka. Prakrit: Jain Agamas, largely Ardhamagadhi.

02 4 OCT 2026

Shyamji Krishna Varma, Highgate and the Urn That Waited

The Prime Minister's tribute on 4 October recalls the London revolutionary whose ashes returned to India only in 2003.

In the late 1920s a man in Geneva paid in advance to have his ashes, and his wife's, kept for 100 years and sent to India whenever it became free. He died on 30 March 1930; the urns were collected on 22 August 2003 and rest at Kranti Teerth, Mandvi. The Prime Minister paid homage to **Shyamji Krishna Varma** on 4 October 2026, his birth anniversary.

A Sanskrit scholar and Inner Temple barrister, Varma served as Diwan in Ratlam, Junagadh and Udaipur, saw how British residents governed princely states, and returned to England in 1897 doubting petitions. In 1905 he founded the **Indian Home Rule Society** in

London and opened **India House** in Highgate, a hostel for Indian students. Britain was educating India's professionals in London, and he put a political house in that pipeline.

The house closed in 1910, after Madan Lal Dhingra shot Sir William Hutt Curzon Wyllie on **1 July 1909**. Do not confuse Varma's London society of 1905 with the **Home Rule Leagues of 1916**, founded in India by Tilak and Besant.

CONCEPT: REVOLUTIONARIES ABROAD

These bodies were founded outside British India, beyond its press and sedition laws: Abhinav Bharat (1904), the Paris Indian Society (1905), the Ghadar Party (San Francisco, 1913) and the Berlin Committee (1914). Britain answered with the Indian Press Act of 1910 and the Defence of India Act of 1915.

REMEMBER

- India House opened 1 July 1905; Savarkar led the circle from 1907.
- The Inner Temple disbarred Varma in 1909; reinstated him posthumously in 2015.
- Bhikaji Cama unfurled a version of an Indian flag at Stuttgart, 1907.

03 23 OCT 2026

Rani Chennamma of Kittur and the Revolt of 1824

Parliament marked the 202nd anniversary of her victory over a Company force, a revolt that preceded the Doctrine of Lapse.

The arithmetic in '202nd anniversary' is the story. On 23 October 2026, at Prerana Sthal in the Parliament complex, the Speaker and Union ministers marked the birth anniversary of **Rani Chennamma of Kittur** and her victory over the British in **October 1824**, thirty-three years before the Revolt of 1857.

Her husband had died, and in 1824 so did her son, so she adopted an heir, Shivalingappa. The Company refused to recognise him, and its Dharwad collector, **St John Thackeray**, moved to seize Kittur's treasury. In the first battle he was killed. The Company returned in December with a larger force; the fort fell, and Chennamma died in captivity at Bailhongal in 1829. Her commander Sangolli Rayanna fought on as a guerrilla and was executed, in 1831 by most accounts.

Kittur shows the practice preceding the doctrine. Dalhousie formalised the **Doctrine of Lapse** only after 1848, yet the Company was refusing adopted heirs a quarter of a century earlier. The same grievance later drew Lakshmibai into 1857.

CONCEPT: THE DOCTRINE OF LAPSE

Under Dalhousie (Governor-General 1848-56), a dependent state whose ruler died without a natural heir passed to the Company; adopted heirs were not recognised. Satara (1848), Jhansi (1853) and Nagpur (1854) fell this way. Awadh (1856) was annexed for alleged misgovernment, not lapse, the usual trap.

REMEMBER

- Chennamma born 23 October 1778 at Kakati, near Belagavi.
- Women resisters: Abbakka, Velu Nachiyar (1780), Chennamma (1824), Lakshmibai (1857).
- Prerana Sthal, inaugurated 16 June 2024, holds fourteen statues.

04 23 OCT 2026

Bastar Dussehra: The 75-Day Festival of Danteshwari

The President's visit to Jagdalpur spotlights India's longest Dussehra, built around a goddess, wooden chariots and a tribal council.

The President attended **Bastar Dussehra** at Jagdalpur on 23 October 2026, prayed at the Maa Danteshwari temple and met the community leaders, the Manjhi and Chalki, at the **Muria Darbar**. This Dussehra differs from the rest of India's in almost every respect.

Its deity is **Danteshwari**, Bastar's presiding goddess, not Rama, and it lasts about **75 days**, the longest Dussehra in India; in 2026 it opened with Pat Jatra on 12 August. Twin wooden chariots, with four and eight wheels, are built afresh each year without nails or metal fittings and pulled through Jagdalpur. A young girl, the Kachan Gadi, gives permission for the festival to proceed. Tradition traces the chariots to Purushottam Dev of the Kakatiya line, who earned the title Rathpati after a pilgrimage to Puri.

The Muria Darbar is the unusual institution: once the ruler heard tribal concerns there, and today elected representatives and administrators do. The President also spoke of Bastar, long a core area of Left-Wing Extremism, as now freed from Naxal violence.

CONCEPT: DUSSEHRA ACROSS INDIA

Mysuru Dasara honours Chamundeshwari in the Wodeyar tradition, with the Jamboo Savari procession. Kullu Dussehra begins on Vijayadashami and lasts a week around Raghunath. UNESCO inscribed Ramlila in 2008 and Durga Puja in 2021. Bastar's Gond groups include the Muria, whose youth dormitory is the ghotul.

REMEMBER

- Pat Jatra opened the 2026 festival on 12 August, Hariyali Amavasya.
- Bahar Raini: chariot hidden at Kumdakot, then ceremonially returned.
- Chitrakote Falls, on the Indravati, is India's widest waterfall.

II INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

05 22 OCT 2026

India and Poland Aim to Double Trade by 2030

Prime Minister Tusk's visit produced a trade target, a defence industry dialogue, Poland's entry into CDRI and a counter-terrorism dialogue.

In 1942 the **Jam Saheb of Nawanagar** sheltered Polish children, freed from Soviet labour camps, at Balachadi near Jamnagar. Warsaw remembers him as the Good Maharaja, and that memory sits in the joint statement of 22 October 2026, issued during the visit of Polish Prime Minister **Donald Tusk**. Four outcomes followed: doubling trade by 2030, Poland joining a disaster-resilience coalition, a defence industry dialogue and a counter-terrorism dialogue.

The visit is the reciprocal leg of the Strategic Partnership agreed in August 2024. Poland joins the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**, India-led and launched in 2019 with a New Delhi secretariat. The **Defence Industry Dialogue** aims at co-development and co-production, though an agreement protecting classified information is still awaited, a sign of how early the relationship is. The sides also welcomed the first India and **Visegrad Group** foreign ministers' meeting.

Joint statements trade positions. Poland backed India's bid for a reformed Security Council and a 2028-29 non-permanent seat; both condemned cross-border terrorism, including the Pahalgam attack. The trade target has no stated baseline, so read it as intent.

CONCEPT: THE VISEGRAD GROUP

Formed in 1991 and named after a Hungarian town, the V4 comprises Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. All joined the EU in 2004 and are NATO members. India invited Poland to join the International Solar Alliance and the Global Biofuels Alliance, launched at the 2023 G20 in New Delhi.

REMEMBER

- Diplomatic relations began 1954; the Action Plan covers 2024-28.
- Valivade near Kolhapur sheltered over 5,000 Polish refugees, 1943 to 1948.
- Operation Ganga, 2022: Poland helped over 2,000 Indian students.

06 13 OCT 2026

BIMSTEC Home Ministers Meet at Last, Eight Years On

The Delhi Declaration calls the Bay of Bengal a common security space, though the eight-year delay tempers expectations.

Eight years separate decision from meeting. The Kathmandu summit of 2018 resolved that **BIMSTEC** should meet at Home Minister level; the first such meeting took place in New Delhi on 13 October 2026, chaired by Amit Shah, and adopted the **Delhi Declaration** across all seven members: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

It calls the Bay of Bengal a **common security space** facing terrorism, drug trafficking, cybercrime, human trafficking and piracy. It condemns cross-border terrorism, urges full implementation of the BIMSTEC convention in force since March 2021, and notes crime groups using technology to traffic people. Yet security cooperation is called complementary to, not a substitute for, bilateral arrangements, a clause that protects smaller members.

Against SAARC, silent since 2014, BIMSTEC excludes Pakistan and includes Thailand and Myanmar, fitting Act East. Pace is the problem: it acquired a charter only in **2022**, and the trafficking economy it targets sits largely in the borderlands of Myanmar, a member in internal conflict.

CONCEPT: BIMSTEC'S GROWTH

Founded in 1997 as BIST-EC with Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand; Myanmar joined that December, Nepal and Bhutan in February 2004. The Charter, signed at Colombo on 30 March 2022, entered into force on 20 May 2024 and gave legal personality. The Secretariat is at Dhaka.

REMEMBER

- Bangkok Summit, 4 April 2025: Bangkok Vision 2030 and Maritime Transport Agreement.
- Sequence: Kathmandu 2018 decided; Bangkok 2025 established; Delhi 2026 held.
- Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.

III ENVIRONMENT

07 15 OCT 2026

Sukhna and Sauj Lift India's Ramsar Tally to 103

A reservoir built in 1958 and a lake in Uttar Pradesh join the list, showing that a wetland's function counts, not its origin.

Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh did not exist before 1958, when engineers dammed the seasonal Sukhna Choe, a stream from the Shivalik hills, while building the new city. On **15 October 2026** the Environment Minister announced that this man-made lake and Sauj Jheel in Uttar Pradesh had taken India's Ramsar tally to **103**; Shekha Jheel had been the 99th in April.

A reservoir qualifies because the Convention's definition of a wetland includes human-made ones; designation tests **ecological function**, not origin. Sukhna has fought silt since it filled: about 25 square kilometres of catchment were acquired and planted, and in 1974 the Choe was diverted around the lake and fed through siltation pots. It is Chandigarh's first Ramsar site. A proposal passes from the State or UT Wetland Authority to the Environment Ministry, then via External Affairs to the Ramsar Secretariat.

Designation adds no new legal protection by itself; that flows from the **Wetlands Rules, 2017**. The wetland lies in Chandigarh, but the sediment that threatens it is made outside, so management plans and the catchment are the real test.

CONCEPT: THE RAMSAR CONVENTION

Adopted at Ramsar, Iran, on 2 February 1971 and in force from 1975; World Wetlands Day marks the date. India acceded in 1982, listing Chilika and Keoladeo first. Its core idea is wise use, and the Montreux Record flags sites whose ecological character has changed or may change.

REMEMBER

- Part of Sukhna's catchment is now the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Shekha Jheel was the 99th site in April 2026.
- Ramsar listing is a commitment; domestic protection is the 2017 Rules.

08 27 OCT 2026

India at Yerevan: Biodiversity Targets Need Funding

At the midpoint review of the Kunming-Montreal framework, Bhupender Yadav argued for national priorities and finance from developed countries.

Almost every country has a biodiversity plan, and most plans are behind schedule. A UN report presented at the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Yerevan found that nearly 90% of Parties have national targets, yet fewer than half judge them on track. On 27 October 2026 Environment Minister **Bhupender Yadav** gave India's national statement.

Yerevan is the halfway review of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**, adopted in December 2022 with 23 targets for 2030. India asked that it be applied by national priorities, with predictable finance, capacity-building and technology from developed countries; backed benefit-sharing from digital sequence information through the multilateral mechanism, including the **Cali Fund**; and urged a precautionary approach to synthetic biology. It cited 1,134 Protected Areas and 103 Ramsar sites.

The Cali Fund asks firms to give 1% of profits or 0.1% of revenue, but only voluntarily; by August 2026 it had reportedly received about USD 6,000. At home, the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 runs a **three-tier** model, from the National Biodiversity Authority at Chennai to village Biodiversity Management Committees.

CONCEPT: CBD AND PROTOCOLS

Opened at Rio in June 1992 and in force from 29 December 1993, the Convention has 196 Parties; the United States signed but never ratified. India ratified in 1994 and hosted COP-11 at Hyderabad in 2012. The Cartagena Protocol covers biosafety; the Nagoya Protocol covers access and benefit-sharing.

REMEMBER

- Target 2 restores 30% of degraded ecosystems; Target 3 conserves 30%.
- Cali Fund: launched 25 February 2025; voluntary, at least 50% to communities.
- India's NBSAP: 23 national targets, 142 indicators; released at COP-16, October 2024.

IV ECONOMY

09 29 OCT 2026

Rabi MSP 2027-28: Wheat Up Just ₹25, Mustard ₹413

The government holds back wheat, already 106% above cost, and favours pulses and oilseeds in prices for the 2027-28 marketing season.

A farmer sowing wheat this winter will sell it in 2027-28, which is why the crop sown in 2026 carries that label. The government approved Minimum Support Prices for **Rabi Marketing**

Season 2027-28 on 30 September 2026, and a PIB Backgrounder on 29 October set out the figures. Wheat rose only ₹25 a quintal, to ₹2,610; safflower rose ₹675 and rapeseed-mustard ₹413.

The reason is the margin over cost. Wheat's MSP is **106%** above its cost of production, the highest of the six crops, against a floor of **50%**, so there was room to hold it back. Safflower sits exactly at the floor even after the largest rise. India imports much of its edible oil and many pulses, so higher prices for oilseeds and lentil, up ₹390, are meant to encourage diversification; gram, up only ₹83, was held back.

A price matters only if the government buys. Cereals go through the Food Corporation of India; pulses and oilseeds through NAFED and NCCF under the Price Support Scheme of PM-AASHA, registered on the **e-Samriddhi** and **e-Samyukti** portals.

CONCEPT: FIXING THE MSP

The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices recommends and the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs decides, for 22 mandated crops. The Commission weighs cost, demand and supply, prices and crop parity, and ensures a minimum margin of 50% over cost, which includes the imputed value of family labour.

REMEMBER

- Rabi crops: sown October-December, harvested March-May, marketed from April.
- Margins over cost: mustard 96%, lentil 92%, gram 59%, barley 58%.
- Pulses Mission: ₹11,440 crore, to 2030-31; target 350 lakh tonnes.

10 8 OCT 2026

GST Council Recommends Ending Arrest Powers

The 57th meeting proposed removing arrest provisions and raising the prosecution threshold, but none of it is law until legislatures amend the Acts.

The 56th GST Council changed the rates; the 57th, in New Delhi on 8 October 2026 under Nirmala Sitharaman, changed the policing. Its headline recommendation is the **removal of arrest provisions**. The prosecution threshold would rise from ₹1 crore to **₹5 crore**, and the general penalty fall from ₹25,000 to ₹10,000. Criminal proceedings remain; what goes is arrest during investigation.

Interception of goods in transit would be allowed only on specific intelligence, authorised by an officer not below Joint Commissioner, and only where the supplier or recipient is in that State, so transit States cannot stop trucks. The logic is detection replacing deterrence: e-invoicing now exposes fake input tax credit close to when it arises, so the Council extended e-invoicing while withdrawing fear. Rule 86A, which blocks credit ledgers, would allow an objection and personal hearing first.

The caveat decides the answer. The Council is a body under **Article 279A** that only recommends; changes need amendment of the CGST Act and State GST Acts, and in **Mohit Minerals (2022)** the Supreme Court held its recommendations persuasive, not binding.

CONCEPT: ARREST AND OFFENCES

Section 69 of the CGST Act lets the Commissioner authorise arrest for specified Section 132 offences in the higher tiers, with production before a magistrate within 24 hours. Section 132 grades offences by amount, the heaviest tier lying above ₹5 crore. Section 125 is the general penalty where none is prescribed.

REMEMBER

- Schedule II: transfer of IPR title, temporary or permanent, is a service.
- ARQP: annual return, quarterly payment; turnover up to ₹5 crore, B2C only.
- Without an e-way bill, goods may be inspected irrespective of jurisdiction.

11 12 OCT 2026

PM GatiShakti at Five: 23,493 Layers on One Map

A platform that builds nothing has put 58 ministries' plans on one map and judges projects before sanction.

The best thing PM GatiShakti has done cannot be photographed: the road not dug up six months after it was laid. The Commerce Ministry marked five years on 12 October 2026. It is not a construction or funding scheme but the **National Master Plan**, a GIS platform on which 58 Central Ministries and all 36 States and UTs place existing and planned assets, carrying over **23,493 data layers**.

Its novelty is timing. The **Network Planning Group** appraises projects for multimodal integration **before sanction**, where most Indian scrutiny is a post-hoc audit; by 11 August 2026, 256 projects had been sanctioned and 198 were under implementation. The Pune-Bengaluru Expressway, 699 km, crosses 15 National Highways, 25 State Highways and 6 railway stations, interfaces found on a map before the first tender. At Jogighopa in Assam the Dhubri-Phulbari distance falls from 205 km to 20 km.

Avoided error leaves no evidence, and a map is not a plan. The Integrated Transport Logistics Authority is to prepare a National Transport Master Plan, turning the shared map into a sequenced programme.

CONCEPT: SEVEN ENGINES

The programme rests on seven infrastructure engines: railways, roads, ports, waterways, airports, mass transport and logistics infrastructure. The Empowered Group of Secretaries takes institutional decisions, the Network Planning Group appraises projects, and a Technical Support Unit advises. Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya trains specialists.

REMEMBER

- Green Energy Corridor: 480-km HVDC line, Pang (Ladakh) to Kaithal (Haryana).
- Pune-Bengaluru Expressway: 7-8 hours saved; 16 crore litres of fuel annually.
- PM GatiShakti Public opens 230 approved datasets to wider users.

12 24 OCT 2026

11 Crore Farmer IDs: AgriStack Hits Its Target Early

Reached five months before the March 2027 deadline, the registry still has to bring tenant cultivators in.

The target of **11 crore Farmer IDs** was reached on the night of 23 October 2026, five months before the 31 March 2027 deadline, the Agriculture Ministry announced. A Farmer ID is a unique digital identity linked to land records, livestock, crops sown and schemes received: Aadhaar says who a person is, while this says who farms what land.

The IDs are built under the **Digital Agriculture Mission**, approved on 2 September 2024 with ₹2,817 crore. Its core, **AgriStack**, rests on three registries: farmers, geo-referenced village maps, and a Crop Sown Registry. States create and maintain them, because agriculture and land are State subjects, which the Minister called cooperative federalism. The aim is fewer repeated documents for Kisan

Credit Card loans, faster crop insurance and relief, and cleaner PM-KISAN lists.

The weakness is structural. The ID is anchored in land records, and those record the owner; the **tenant farmer** who actually cultivates, bears the loss and needs the loan may be missed. States are working to bring cultivators in, and the 14-digit ULPIN, called Bhu-Aadhaar, supports record quality.

CONCEPT: DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

India's digital public infrastructure began with Aadhaar for identity and UPI for payments, then spread to health (Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission), credit (Account Aggregator, Unified Lending Interface) and agriculture (AgriStack). Agriculture and land are State subjects, so the Centre funds and sets standards while States hold the records.

REMEMBER

- Mission components: DPI, Digital General Crop Estimation Survey, IT initiatives.
- Mission outlay ₹2,817 crore; Centre's share ₹1,940 crore.
- Approved by the Union Cabinet on 2 September 2024.

V POLITY & GOVERNANCE

13 30 OCT 2026

A National Social Security Board for Gig Workers

The Board advises on welfare schemes under the Code on Social Security, while the aggregators' levy still awaits notification.

A delivery rider and a freelance photographer are both gig workers, but only the rider is also a platform worker. The Code on Social Security, 2020 was the first central law to define both, and on 30 October 2026 the Labour Ministry announced the **National Social Security Board for Unorganised Workers and Gig & Platform Workers**. The Union Labour Minister presides, and it must meet at least three times a year.

The Board is advisory, not a regulator: it recommends schemes, advises the Centre, monitors welfare schemes and reviews State record-keeping and spending. For gig workers its membership is balanced, five aggregator and five worker representatives. The Code does not make workers employees of platforms; it funds social security through an aggregator contribution of **1% to 2% of turnover**, capped at **5%** of payouts to workers.

Three things are pending: the levy rate and start date, which the Centre must notify; the schemes themselves, since the Board only recommends; and portability for workers on several apps in several States, which e-Shram is meant to solve.

CONCEPT: CONCURRENT LABOUR SUBJECTS

Social security (Entry 23) and labour welfare (Entry 24) are Concurrent List subjects, so States also legislate; Rajasthan passed the first gig-worker law in 2023. The four Labour Codes, in force from 21 November 2025, replaced 29 central laws. Articles 41, 42 and 43 supply the Directive Principles basis.

REMEMBER

- Code on Social Security replaced nine laws, including the EPF Act 1952.
- NITI Aayog: 77 lakh gig workers in 2020-21; 2.35 crore by 2029-30.
- Section 114(6): same Board acts for gig workers; 114(4): aggregator levy.

14 28 OCT 2026

PM Viksit Gram Swaraj Yojana: ₹7,396 Crore for Panchayats

The scheme builds no assets; it trains 32 lakh representatives and equips Panchayats to plan, spend and audit grants.

The Cabinet on 28 October 2026 approved the **Pradhan Mantri Viksit Gram Swaraj Yojana**, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for 2026-27 to 2030-31, matching the Sixteenth Finance Commission period. The outlay is **₹7,395.55 crore**: ₹4,869.48 crore from the Centre and ₹2,526.07 crore from States. It builds no roads or houses; it helps Panchayats plan, spend, account for and explain the money they receive, reaching about 32 lakh elected representatives.

The timing explains it: the Commission recommended about ₹4.35 lakh crore for rural local bodies, released only if bodies are constituted, audited accounts are published and State Finance Commissions are set up on time. Annual targets include **2.55 lakh** Gram Panchayat Development Plans on eGramSwaraj, as many online audit plans, and training for 32 lakh representatives.

Part IX leaves the choice to States: Articles **243G and 243H** say they 'may' devolve functions and taxes. So the scheme helps with funds, a little with staff through contractual hires, and not at all with **functions**. A trained Sarpanch cannot run the village school if the State has not handed it over.

CONCEPT: CONSTITUTION'S PART IX

The 73rd Amendment (1992) inserted Part IX. Article 243A covers the Gram Sabha, 243G plans and the 29 Eleventh Schedule subjects, 243H taxes, 243I the State Finance Commission and 243J audit. Article 243M excludes Scheduled and tribal areas, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram; PESA 1996 extends Part IX to Fifth Schedule areas.

REMEMBER

- Lineage: RGSA 2018-22; revamped RGSA 2022-26; PM VGSY 2026-31.
- Sixteenth Finance Commission: chair Arvind Panagariya; rural-urban split 60:40.
- General States pay 40% in Centrally Sponsored Schemes; North-East and Himalayan 10%.

VI SCIENCE & HEALTH

15 13 OCT 2026

India's TB Fall of 21% Against a Target of 80%

A campaign of volunteers and cadets launches as India outpaces the world yet misses its own 2025 elimination goal.

Two numbers tell this story. India cut new tuberculosis cases by **21%** between 2015 and 2024, against about 12% globally. But the National TB Elimination Programme had aimed at an **80%** cut by 2025, and the deadline has passed. On 13 October 2026 the Health Ministry launched **JOSH teams**, Joint Squad for Health, in 11 states and 55 districts on a pilot basis, pairing MY Bharat volunteers and NCC cadets with a Class-I officer.

The progress is real: incidence fell from about 237 to 187 per lakh and treatment coverage rose from 53% to **92%**. India chose 2025 when the global goal is 2030, and carries about 25% of world cases and 32% of multidrug-resistant ones. TB tracks crowding and undernutrition, so Nikshay Poshan Yojana support rose to ₹1,000 a month.

The most consequential change may be **BPaLM**, a six-month all-oral regimen for drug-resistant TB, approved in India in September 2024 in place of courses of 18 months or more. In the TB-PRACTECAL trial success was about 89% against 52%, with severe adverse events at 23% against 48%.

CONCEPT: DRUG-RESISTANT TB

TB is caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis. Multidrug-resistant and rifampicin-resistant TB arises largely when treatment is interrupted; Indian treatment success is about 77%, against about 90% for drug-sensitive disease. BPaLM stands for Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid and Moxifloxacin. The global Sustainable Development Goal target is 2030.

REMEMBER

- Screenings have crossed 28.1 crore; 46,118 Gram Panchayats certified TB-free.
- Nikshay Poshan Yojana rose from ₹500 to ₹1,000 a month, 1 November 2024.
- India has about 25% of global TB cases and about 28% of deaths.

16 30 OCT 2026

Geospatial Push: Survey of India and the 2022 Policy

A Survey of India workshop restates an 'enable, invest and adopt' approach that treats mapping as an economic resource.

In 1852 calculations from the Great Trigonometrical Survey showed Peak XV to be the world's highest mountain; it was named Everest in 1865, after a Surveyor General who had played no part in measuring it. On 30 October 2026 the **Survey of India** held a New Delhi workshop on the geospatial economy, where Dr Jitendra Singh summed up policy as 'enable, invest and adopt'.

Maps were once tightly controlled under the National Map Policy of 2005. On **15 February 2021** liberalised guidelines removed prior approval, security clearance and licences for Indian entities to collect and publish geospatial data. The **National Geospatial Policy 2022** followed in December 2022: it replaced the 2005 policy, made the Department of Science and Technology nodal agency and created an apex committee.

Targets run in steps: a legal framework by 2025, 5-10 cm mapping and a high-accuracy elevation model by **2030**, and digital twins of major cities by 2035. Applications are already visible in SVAMITVA drone property cards, the PM Gati Shakti master plan and ULPIN, the 14-digit land parcel ID.

CONCEPT: GREAT TRIGONOMETRICAL SURVEY

The Survey of India, set up in 1767, is India's oldest scientific department, headquartered at Dehradun under the Department of Science and Technology. The GTS began in 1802 under William Lambton near Madras; George Everest was Surveyor General from 1830 to 1843. CORS stations correct satellite positions to centimetre accuracy.

REMEMBER

- National Geospatial Mission, Budget 2025-26: elevation model from 10 m to 25 cm.
- SVAMITVA launched 24 April 2020, National Panchayati Raj Day.
- The mission uses PM Gati Shakti; initial outlay ₹100 crore.

TEST YOURSELF *12 questions on the month*

1. Which pair of languages is classical but outside the Eighth Schedule?
   a. Odia and Malayalam
   b. Pali and Prakrit
   c. Marathi and Bengali
   d. Tamil and Telugu

2. Shyamji Krishna Varma's Indian Home Rule Society was founded in:
   a. Madras, 1916
   b. Belgaum, 1916
   c. San Francisco, 1913
   d. London, 1905

3. Which state was annexed for alleged misgovernment, not under the Doctrine of Lapse?
   a. Awadh
   b. Satara
   c. Jhansi
   d. Nagpur

4. Which India-led body did Poland join during Prime Minister Tusk's visit?
   a. International Solar Alliance
   b. Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative
   c. Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
   d. Global Biofuels Alliance

5. Sukhna Lake, though man-made, became a Ramsar site because:
   a. Reservoirs are exempt from criteria
   b. Ramsar tests function, not origin
   c. It formed naturally in 1958
   d. Designation requires human construction

6. Which Kunming-Montreal target commits countries to conserve at least 30% of land and sea?
   a. Target 2
   b. Target 6
   c. Target 19
   d. Target 3

7. Wheat's MSP rose only ₹25 for 2027-28 mainly because:
   a. It is no longer a mandated crop
   b. Only NAFED procures it
   c. Its margin over cost was already 106%
   d. Its cost of production fell sharply

8. The 57th GST Council's removal of arrest provisions takes legal effect only after:
   a. Parliament and State legislatures amend the Acts
   b. The Council notifies it
   c. The Supreme Court approves it
   d. The Finance Minister signs an order

9. What makes the Network Planning Group unusual in Indian administration?
   a. It audits completed projects
   b. It sanctions project funds
   c. It builds roads directly
   d. It appraises projects before sanction

10. Under Section 114(4) of the Code on Social Security, an aggregator contributes:
    a. 1-2% of profit, uncapped
    b. A flat fee set by States
    c. 1-2% turnover, capped at 5% of payouts
    d. 5% of turnover, no cap

11. Which Article lets States entrust Panchayats with plans for economic development and social justice?
    a. Article 243A
    b. Article 243G
    c. Article 243I
    d. Article 243J

12. BPaLM, adopted in India in September 2024, is a:
    a. Six-month all-oral drug-resistant TB regimen
    b. Nine-month injectable regimen
    c. TB vaccine for adults
    d. Handheld X-ray triage tool

ANSWERS **1.** (b) Pali and Prakrit are classical but not in the Eighth Schedule. **2.** (d) The 1905 London society differs from India's 1916 Home Rule Leagues. **3.** (a) Awadh fell in 1856 for misgovernment; the others lapsed. **4.** (c) Poland joined CDRI; it was only invited to the other three. **5.** (b) Ramsar covers human-made wetlands; protection in India comes from the 2017 Rules. **6.** (d) Target 3 conserves; Target 2 restores 30% of degraded ecosystems. **7.** (c) The policy floor is a 50% margin; wheat was far above it. **8.** (a) Article 279A body only recommends; Mohit Minerals held recommendations not binding. **9.** (d) Most scrutiny is a post-hoc audit; the NPG acts before sanction. **10.** (c) The Centre notifies the rate; the start date is notified separately. **11.** (b) 243A is the Gram Sabha, 243I the Finance Commission, 243J audit. **12.** (a) Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid, Moxifloxacin, replacing courses of 18 months or more.

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