

CURRENT AFFAIRS

UPSC CSE 2026



**DAILY CURRENT
AFFAIRS NOTES**

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Urgent update

- **Retail inflation for October** fell to **0.25%**, the lowest since **2012**, but this sharp drop is a **statistical anomaly**, not a real fall in price levels.
- The **food and beverages category** recorded a **3.7% fall**, the largest drop in the history of the current CPI series.
- The decline occurred mainly because food inflation in **2024 was 9.7%**, creating a **high base effect**, not due to an actual fall in current food prices. **Vegetable prices** have in fact been rising recently, despite the negative food inflation figure.
- Since **food and beverages have a weight of nearly 46%** in the CPI basket, this base-effect-driven decline pulled the **entire index down**.
- Inflation in other major subgroups—**fuel & light, housing, tobacco, and miscellaneous**—was **higher in 2025** compared to last year.
- The mismatch between **measured inflation and perceived inflation** highlights the **urgency of updating the CPI basket**.
- The **RBI's Monetary Policy Committee** uses CPI as its **benchmark** for interest rate decisions and will meet in **December**.
- Policymaking will be harder due to **growth data distorted by GST rate-cut-driven demand** and **inflation data distorted by base effects**.
- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** has said the **new CPI series** will be ready by the **first quarter of the next financial year**.

Donald Trump shakes up the global nuclear order

- Today, the global nuclear order presents a contradiction: nuclear weapons have not been used for **80 years**, arsenals have reduced from **65,000** to **less than 12,500**, and only **nine states** possess them, yet the system is under strain following recent announcements by **U.S. President**.

Resumption of 'nuclear tests'

- He announced that he had instructed the **Department of War** to **start testing nuclear weapons**, citing other countries' testing programmes.
- He stated, "**Russia is second, China is a distant third**," though unclear whether he meant **nuclear explosive testing** or nuclear weapon systems testing.
- Nuclear labs and Nevada testing facilities fall under the **Department of Energy**, not the Department of War.
- **China, Russia, and the U.S.** are designing and developing new nuclear weapons.
 - Russia tested the **nuclear-powered Burevestnik cruise missile** (14,000 km) and the **Poseidon underwater nuclear-powered torpedo**.
 - China has been testing **hypersonic missiles** and in 2021 tested a **nuclear-capable hypersonic glide vehicle**.

CTBT and its uncertain future

- **Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)** signed by **187 countries**, but has not entered into force.
- Required ratifications pending from **U.S., China, Israel, Egypt, Iran**; **Russia withdrew** its ratification in 2023.
- **India, Pakistan, North Korea** have neither signed nor ratified.
- India and Pakistan tested in **1998** and observe a **voluntary moratorium**; North Korea conducted **six tests** (2006–2017). Given geopolitics, **prospects for CTBT entering into force are bleak**.

Arms control under strain

- The **New START Treaty** (limits: **700 launchers, 1,550 warheads**) expires in February **2026**; no talks are expected.
- China is not part of any arms control and its arsenal has expanded from **below 300** to about **600**, likely to exceed **1,000 by 2030**.
- A **nuclear arms race** is already underway; resuming explosive testing will **accelerate** it.
- Russia and China deny clandestine tests but will follow if the U.S. resumes testing.
- China, with only **47 tests**, would benefit most from resumed testing.
- **India** continues to observe a **voluntary moratorium**.

How is SEC ensuring fair elections?

- Following the Supreme Court's directions, **Maharashtra will hold local body elections in three phases** beginning in December, with all elections to be completed by **January 31, 2026**, amid Opposition criticism of **errors and duplication** in voters' lists.

Can the State Election Commission delete duplicate names?

- The **State Election Commission (SEC)** does **not** have the right to **add or delete names** from voters' lists.
- Constitutional provisions give the SEC **superintendence, direction and control** of elections to urban and rural local bodies. Under the five Local Body Acts, the SEC does **not** prepare a separate voters' list.
- It uses the lists prepared by the **Election Commission under the RP Act, 1950**, by **bifurcating** them into the relevant wards. For the upcoming elections, the SEC will use the electoral list **as of July 1, 2025**.
- Cut-off date for **first-time voters** was not revised after **January 1, 2025**, leading to disappointment among those who turned 18 later.

What does the SEC do?

- The SEC is responsible for **delimitation** of all Assembly constituencies into **wards**.
- It divides the names of voters listed under each Assembly constituency into the **respective wards**.
- While the SEC cannot add or delete names, it will **mark double and doubtful entries**.
- A tool will identify **duplicate names** using four filters: **first name, middle name, last name, gender**.
- Chief Electoral Officers will receive the duplicate list, **mark entries with stars**, and undertake **field verification**.

Holding up GLASS to India; securing stewardship to tackle AMR

- WHO released its **Global antibiotic resistance surveillance report 2025 (GLASS)**, confirming that **antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in India is a serious and escalating threat**, with resistance rates among the **highest in the world**.

Key findings of the GLASS report

- In **2023, one in three bacterial infections** in India were resistant to commonly used antibiotics.
- Globally, **one in six** confirmed infections were resistant.
- India is disproportionately affected due to **high infectious disease burden, overuse and misuse** of antibiotics, **gaps in surveillance**, and **weak healthcare infrastructure**.
- High resistance rates noted in **E.coli, Klebsiella pneumoniae, Staphylococcus aureus**, especially in **ICUs**.
- Aggravating factors: **OTC antibiotic access, self-medication, incomplete courses, environmental contamination, uneven enforcement** of regulations.
- WHO acknowledged national initiatives such as the **National Programme on AMR Containment**, but highlighted **insufficient funding** and **poor coordination** across human, animal, and environmental health.
- Most surveillance data comes from **tertiary hospitals**, not representing community or rural areas.

Incomplete data

- Experts note AMR levels in India are among the **highest globally**, consistent with **ICMR's AMRSN/i-AMRSS** and **NCDC's NARS-Net**.
- These datasets primarily cover **tertiary hospitals**, leading to **biased overestimates** that do not reflect secondary and primary care patterns.
- India needs AMR centres spread across the country to avoid **erroneous conclusions**.
- WHO urges **complete nationwide surveillance, rational antibiotic use, and stronger regulation** to prevent routine infections from becoming **untreatable**.

Kerala model

- Implementation of India's **National Action Plan on AMR (NAP-AMR)** has been **slow**, with only a few States operationalising their plans.
- **Kerala stands out:**
 - Launched its **Kerala Antimicrobial Resistance Strategic Action Plan** in 2018.
 - Adopted **One Health** and inter-sectoral collaboration.

- Started **AMRITH** in 2024 to stop **OTC sale of antibiotics**.
- Latest antibiogram shows a **slight dip** in AMR levels.
- Kerala aims to become **antibiotic-literate by December 2025** through awareness and proper antibiotic use initiatives.

Colistin ban

- The **2019 ban on colistin** (previously used as a growth promoter in animal husbandry) is considered a **significant intervention**. Quantification of its benefits requires **long-term studies**.
- Consistent implementation of **State and national AMR policies** is essential.
- India needs more centres reporting resistance, including **500+ NABL labs** and expanded **microbiology capacity** at peripheral levels.

Newer antibiotics

- In India, **CDSO** has approved **four new antibiotic candidates**, while **six others** have global approval.
- However, the pipeline remains **thin**:
 - Only **12 of 32** traditional antibiotics meet WHO innovation criteria.
 - Only **four** target **WHO's highest priority critical pathogens**.
- New antibiotics must have **novel mechanisms**, target **MDR pathogens**, offer **oral and IV formulations**, be **safe, affordable**, and align with **stewardship principles**.

Global efforts and funding

- The **AMR Industry Alliance** works to accelerate **antibiotic discovery and diagnostics**, strengthen **equitable access**, and ensure **responsible manufacturing**.
- World AMR Awareness Week (18–24 November) urges the world to **"Act Now: Protect Our Present, Secure Our Future."**

SC bats for protection of pristine sal forest in Jharkhand's Saranda

- The **Supreme Court** directed the **Jharkhand government** to declare **31,468.25 hectares (≈314 sq. km.)** of the **Saranda forest area as a wildlife sanctuary**.
- Saranda is one of the **world's most pristine sal forests** and home to **critically endangered species** such as the **sal forest tortoise, four-horned antelope, Asian palm civet, and wild elephants**.
- The region has long been inhabited by the **Ho, Munda, Uraon and allied Adivasi communities**, whose subsistence and cultural traditions are tied to forest produce.
- The Saranda forest division accounts for **26% of India's iron ore reserves**, and steel plants of **SAIL and Tata** depend heavily on mining here.
- The court reminded Jharkhand that the **State has a positive obligation** to provide **statutory protection** to forests and wildlife and to declare **ecologically significant areas** as protected.

Centre releases draft Seeds Bill; farm outfits cautious, industry welcomes it

- After two failed attempts in **2004** and **2019**, the Union government has introduced a **new draft Seeds Bill**.
- The **Union Agriculture Ministry** said the draft is aligned with **current agricultural and regulatory requirements**.
- The proposed legislation aims to **replace the Seeds Act, 1966** and the **Seeds (Control) Order, 1983**.
- The **seed industry welcomed** the move, while **farmer organisations** reminded the Centre that earlier Bills were withdrawn due to farmer resistance.
- The draft **Seeds Bill, 2025** seeks to **regulate seed quality**, ensure farmers' access to **high-quality seeds at affordable rates**, protect farmers from losses, and **liberalise seed imports** to promote access to global varieties.
- On enforcement, the Bill proposes to **decriminalise minor offences**, promoting **Ease of Doing Business** and reducing compliance burden, while retaining **strong penalties** for serious violations.
- As per the draft, **every seed dealer must obtain a registration certificate** from the State government before selling, importing, exporting, or supplying any seed.

- The Bill mandates regulation of seed sales so that seed varieties **meet minimum standards** of germination, genetic purity, physical purity, traits, seed health, and other norms as per the **Indian Minimum Seed Certification Standards**.

India's carbon emission rise slower this year, says report

- **India's 2025 carbon emissions** have increased **slowly** compared to last year.
- **Global carbon emissions** are expected to rise to **38 billion tonnes (1.1%)** this year.
- India's emissions are expected to increase by **1.4%**, according to the **Global Carbon Project**.
- This is lower than in recent years — in **2024, India's emissions grew 4%**.
- The slower increase was partly due to a **favourable monsoon** reducing cooling demand and **strong growth in renewable energy**, lowering coal use.
- **China's emissions** in 2025 are projected to increase by **0.4%**, slower than in recent years.
- This was due to **moderate growth in energy consumption** and **extraordinary growth in renewable energy**.
- Emissions are projected to grow in the **United States (+1.9%)** and the **European Union (0.4%)** in 2025.
- India is the **third largest emitter** at **3.2 billion tonnes annually (2024)**, behind the **U.S. (4.9 billion tonnes)** and **China (12 billion tonnes)**.
- India's **per capita emission** is **2.2 tonnes per year**, the **second lowest** among 20 major economies.
- **Coal** is the major fuel type contributing to India's emissions.
- The projected rise in global fossil CO₂ emissions in 2025 is driven by **coal (+0.8%)**, **oil (+1%)**, and **natural gas (+1.3%)**.
- From **2015–2024**, emissions from **permanent deforestation** remained high at **around 4 billion tonnes CO₂/year**.
- Permanent removals through **reafforestation and forest regrowth** offset **about half** of permanent deforestation emissions.
- **Total CO₂ emissions** have grown more slowly in the past decade (**0.3%/year**) compared to the previous decade (**1.9%/year**). The remaining **carbon budget** to limit warming to **1.5°C** is **“virtually exhausted.”**
- The remaining budget for 1.5°C is **170 billion tonnes of CO₂**, equal to **four years** at 2025 emission levels.

Centre junks quality control order on polyester fibre, yarn

- The Centre has **revoked the Quality Control Order (QCO)** on **polyester fibre and yarn**, and **PTA and MEG**, introduced two years ago. The decision was issued under **Section 16 of the BIS Act**.
- The revoked QCOs covered **ethylene glycol, terephthalic acid, polyester spun/grey/white yarns, polyester continuous filament yarn, partially oriented yarn, and polyester industrial yarn**.
- Earlier QCOs had **restricted imports** of polyester yarn, fibre, filament, and raw materials **PTA and MEG**.
- India faces a **shortage of PTA and MEG**, yet QCOs were introduced on them.
- These are **critical raw materials** for the **man-made fibre sector**.

Why Hepatitis A deserves a place in India's universal immunisation programme

- As India debates the inclusion of the **typhoid conjugate vaccine (TCV)** in its Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP), experts argue that **Hepatitis A** — a growing cause of **acute liver failure** — may deserve **even greater priority** despite the availability of a safe and long-lasting **indigenous vaccine**.

On Hepatitis A

- Hepatitis A is a **silent but mounting threat**. Improved sanitation has reduced early childhood exposure, leaving **adolescents and adults unprotected**, where the disease is **far more severe**.
- Recent **outbreaks in Kerala, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi** highlight this shift.
- Hospitals report clusters of **acute liver failure** and even deaths.
- Unlike typhoid, there is **no specific treatment** for severe **Hepatitis A**; recovery depends on **supportive care**.
- Seroprevalence studies show a decline in protective antibodies — from **over 90% to less than 60%** in many urban regions. Hepatitis A is now an **emerging public health concern** affecting **susceptible young people**.

Vaccine characteristics

- **Hepatitis A is entirely preventable.** Both live-attenuated and inactivated vaccines offer **90–95% protection**, with immunity lasting **15–20 years**, often lifelong.
- India has an indigenous vaccine: **Biovac-A**, a live-attenuated vaccine with an excellent **safety and efficacy** record for over **two decades**.
- Hepatitis A vaccines do **not** face issues of **waning immunity, antibiotic resistance, or carrier states**.
- A **single dose** of the live vaccine can confer **durable, long-term protection**.
- It is a **model vaccine**: safe, effective, long-lasting, and already made in India.

Implementation approach

- India could begin by introducing Hepatitis A vaccination in **States with repeated outbreaks** or declining antibody prevalence. **Periodic serosurveys** can guide population-level expansion.
- A **phased, evidence-based rollout** aligns with UIP's successful implementation model.

Typhoid vs Hepatitis A

- Both cause significant illness but have **different epidemiology and control prospects**.
- Typhoid mortality has declined due to **antibiotics and better sanitation**, though **AMR remains a concern**.
- Hepatitis A affects **older children and young adults**, lacks specific treatment, and strikes **across socio-economic groups**, with **more severe disease** in these age groups.
- This is not an argument against TCV, but a plea for **rational sequencing**:
 - **Typhoid control** is important.
 - Hepatitis A control is **easier, more cost-effective**, and backed by a **home-grown vaccine**.

Way forward

- UIP has a history of foresight — **Hepatitis B, rotavirus, pneumococcal vaccines**. Adding **Hepatitis A** would be a **natural next step** in strengthening India's immunisation programme.